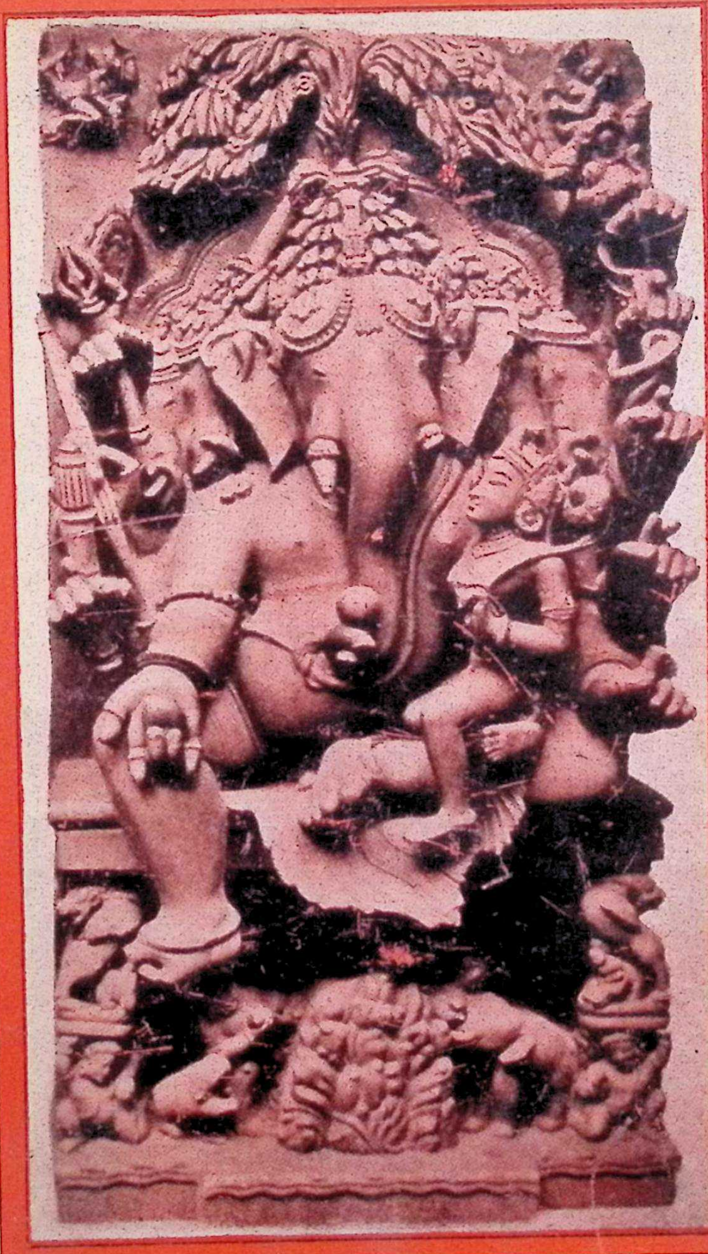
Gaṇeśa



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The most universally adored of all the Hindu gods, Gaṇeśa, the 'Lord of the Gaṇaś' also occupies a pride of place among the gods of the Hindu pantheon. It was because of his popularity as a munificient god that he was known by the various epithets Vinayaka, Vighnesvara, Siddhidata, Heramba etc., which stress his benevolent nature and his other names viz., Vakra-Tunda, Eka-Danta, Akhu-Ratha, Lambodara, Gananana, etc. connote his unusual physical and other attributes.

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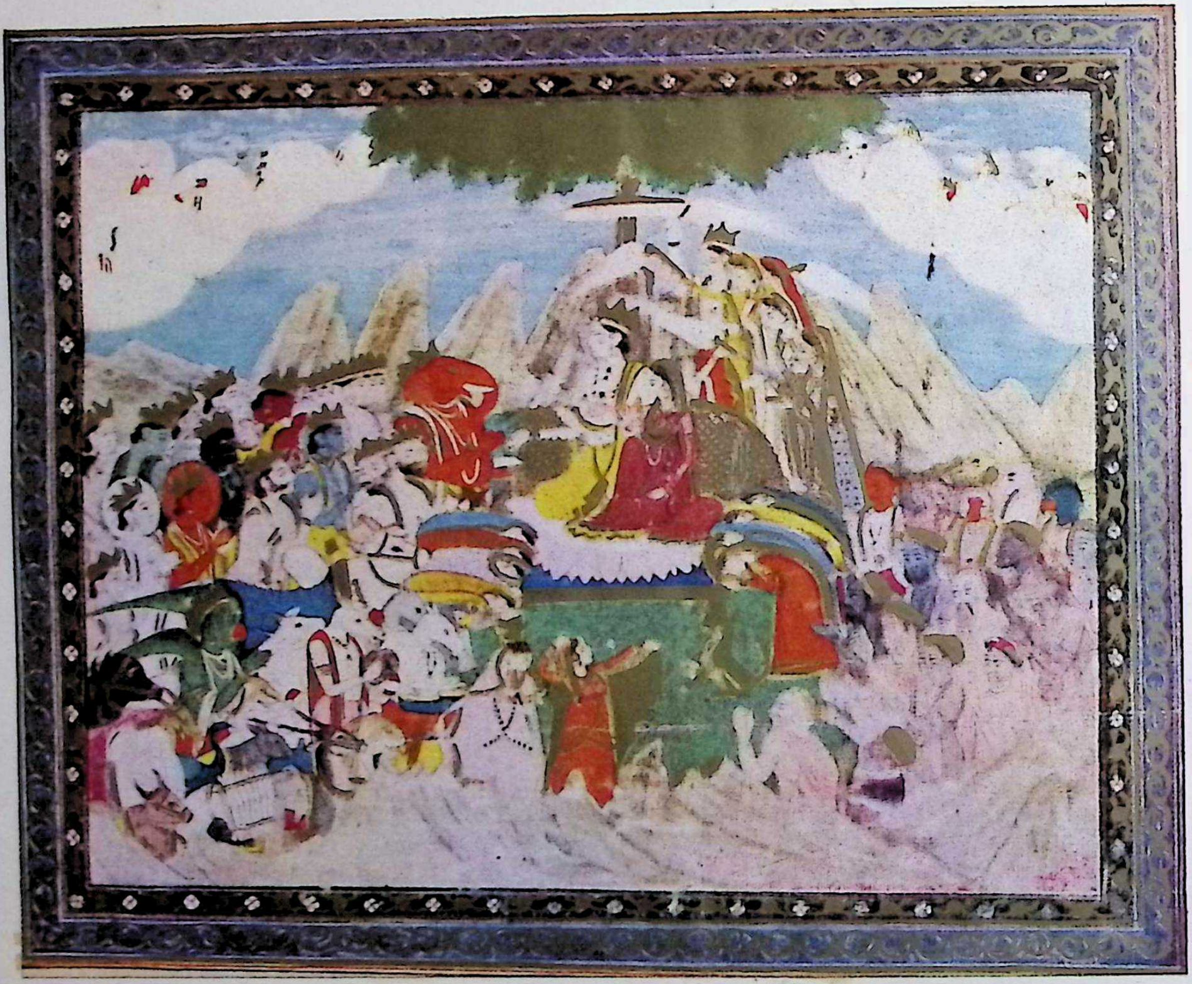

Śiva and Pārvatī receiving Brahmā, Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya, Kṛiṣṇa and other Hindu gods in Durbar on Mount Kailāsa

GAṆEŚA

A MONOGRAPH ON THE ELEPHANT-FACED GOD

BY

ALICE GETTY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

ALFRED FOUCHER

Professeur à l'Université de Paris
Membre de l'Institut Francais

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INTRODUCTION

NEED we be surprised if Gaṇeśa, God of Success, achieved for himself a truly remarkable career? As the reader will gather from the present work, his striking figure won all the Eastern countries in turn. His presentation to the European and American publics was all that was required to make him known throughout the world, and every one will agree that for the last step he could not have chosen better sponsors than the author of *The Gods of Northern Buddhism* and the Clarendon Press.

Blinking his cunning little eyes on either side of his huge trunk, he can boast, with a certain feeling of gratification, that in spite of his uncouth looks, or perhaps because of them, he is now universally accepted; and this must be all the more flattering to his self-esteem, since—as he himself is quite aware—his humble origins are evident to every one. A mere glance at him shows that he still bears unquestionable signs of his modest lineage. Even if we ignore for the moment his ungainly elephant's head, yet his short arms, the bulging girth overhanging his stunted legs, are enough to place him at once in the class to which he belongs. Obviously, Gaṇeśa is linked with those stout, thickset goblins with which the earliest sculptures of ancient India have made us familiar, and that appear so often in the texts, now as the imps of Māra, the Buddhist Satan, now as the yakṣas of Kubera, God of Wealth, now as the rākṣasas of Kubera's brother, Rāvaṇa, and sometimes as the gaṇas of the 'King of the Mountains', Śiva. For sheer antiquity their race can hold its own. Those grotesque dwarfs spring from a family which can be traced, since time began, from one end of the old continent to the other. By their misshapen bodies, their guardianship of treasure hoards, and by their freakish and too often evil characters, the gnomes of India (known under the various names already mentioned and many more besides, such as *kumbhāṇḍa, piśāca, vetāla,* &c.) are unquestionably the cousins, morally and physically, of the Scandinavian trolls, the Celtic korrigans, the Anglo-Saxon goblins, the German kobolds, the Thraco-Phrygian Kabiri, not to mention the Arabian jinn. Even to-day we find them deeply rooted in our countryside, disporting themselves on moors, in woods, and in caves; but venerable die-hards as they are, those spirits occupy the lowest rung in the hierarchic ladder. Gaṇeśa, as his name implies, rose to the rank of chieftain (*īśa*); yet in attaining the dignity of 'Lord of the Hordes', his appearance remained like that of his followers, the gaṇas.

In this respect he was not so fortunate as the other 'army-leaders' who form the 'General Staff' of Indian genii. The artist is only too willing to give them a pleasing form, as in the case of Field-Marshal (*mahā-senā-pati*) Skanda. It is rare that he will ever do more than spoil this elegance by adding plumpness, necessarily associated in the Indian mind with wealth, as, for example, in the representation of General (*senā-pati*) Pāñcika. What, however, differentiates Gaṇeśa from his fellow-spirits is not only his excessive corpulence, but a still greater handicap, equally impossible to conceal—his elephant's head: nothing more is needed to suggest, in fact to prove, his animal origin. In the pantheons of Greece or Egypt, of Mesopotamia or India, deities with heads of animals or birds are not wanting, and it would seem as if there were some fixed law of iconography in regard to them. As far as we know, no human-shaped deity, even in the case of a metamorphosis, thinks of adopting an animal mask otherwise than *en passant*; whereas all the theriomorphic gods, on the contrary, show a tendency to shed their original bodies of lions, monkeys, jackals, ibises, falcons, &c., and permanently to assume human form. During the period of transformation, morphological compromises of all kinds were imagined by artists and by devotees, from goat-hoofed genii to deities with horns. But as a general rule, the part of the animal body which the god or goddess in process of anthropomorphosis clings to longest is the head, just as the piece of national dress that Asiatic peoples in the throes of Europeanization relinquish last is the head-dress. On the other hand, this very conservatism, so easy to understand, betrays the preceding stages of a transformation still incomplete. Thus, when dealing with a therianthropomorphic figure of Gaṇeśa's type, we can easily trace it back to the animal prototype from which it came; and here we plunge into the oldest layer of superstition which our developed minds can grasp: totem worship and agrarian rites. Is it surprising, then, that Gaṇeśa's biography, thrusting its roots into the most obscure beliefs of the human race, should be difficult to write?

One guiding ray, however, seems to pierce the darkness surrounding him and his origin. An objective analysis of the figure of Gaṇeśa and the convincing analogy provided by every ancient form of religion lead us to admit that he made his entry into the world of things sacred under the guise of an elephant. Now while the existence of goblins is a matter for personal belief or disbelief, that of the elephant is an obvious fact. Moreover this odd creature was bound, through its great height, unequalled strength, and surprising docility, through the extraordinary dexterity of its trunk as well as its intelligence, wrongly or rightly praised, to hold a large place in Indian folklore. Yet these data only add to our sense of frustration, since, curious as it may seem, we are unable so far to discover any relation between the worship offered to Gaṇeśa and the surviving manifestations of old popular superstitions, such as, for instance, the peculiar regard in which the white elephant is held in those parts of Indo-China where Indian influence once prevailed. We are not more successful if we search for clues in the innumerable puns and comparisons which abound in Sanskrit literature concerning the protuberances above its forehead and the honied liquor that oozes from its temples during the mating season. Nor are the legends more helpful than the poems. In several of the jātakas or tales of the past lives of the Buddha, the elephant plays an important part, his role being inspired by a whole range of emotional contrasts, from the fury of the savage solitaire destroying everything in his path to the sublime generosity of the dying King of the Herd, who forgives his murderer, the hunter, and bestows his ivory tusks upon him. During the last existence of the Buddha the elephant reappears frequently: the future Śākya-muni is said to have come down from heaven in the form of a young elephant; and when he retired into solitude, he was waited upon by an elephant, while one of his most important miracles was the taming of a mad elephant that his enemies let loose against him in the main thoroughfare of Rājagṛiha. Here again though, in whatever light we examine these edifying stories, we find no means of linking them up with the little that we know of the personality and cult of Gaṇeśa; and our efforts are equally fruitless when we turn to the Brahmanic mythology; for we see no connexion whatever either between our hero and the famous mount of Indra, the elephant Airāvata, or between him and the eight cosmic elephants which, facing the four cardinal points and the four intermediary regions, are believed to support the earth on their backs. It is true that on either side of the bay of Bengal, in the Buddhist as well as the Brahmanic texts, we are dealing with Indian ideas; but even if those beliefs, metaphors, and legends have sprung up from the same soil, it is none the less clear that they do not follow the same trail nor develop on the same plane.

The almost complete absence of ancient documents relating to Gaṇeśa is somewhat disconcerting, for it is evident that without them no historical reconstruction is possible. Yet must one necessarily succumb to the habitual failing of the philologist whose learned candour leads him to infer that all things have their beginning from the time of their first mention in the texts? Such a conclusion would be absurd, for in any given place and moment there are always many more social facts than those recorded in writing. It is obviously true even of our own days, and the farther we delve into the illiterate past of humanity the more we understand this to be the case. One must be as short-sighted as a bookworm to deduce from the lack of any mention of Gaṇeśa in the early epics, that the god did not exist before the fourth or fifth century of our era, and it would require a certain amount of naïveté to believe that this divinity could have suddenly been conceived *ex nihilo*, and his worship established throughout the whole of India at such a comparatively recent date. Whoever is experienced in the ways of that country knows well that by then the Elephant-god had already behind him century upon century, if not thousands of years, of silent waiting at the foot of the sacred tree of the pre-Aryan village, standing on the roughly built platform which he shared with the other rustic deities: with the snakes which were to give birth to many Nāga-kings, with the monkey which was to become Hanumān, with the vulture which would later grow into Garuḍa, with the lion, the boar, the tortoise, and the fish, all of which were in time to be looked upon as avatars of Viṣṇu. For those more or less shapeless stones, those roughly carved pieces of wood or summarily outlined figures in clay, all those totems or fetishes—once bathed in the blood of human victims and to-day still smeared with minium—were so deeply rooted in an unfathomable past that the aristocracy of the new gods, introduced by the immigrant Aryans, were compelled to adopt them in some form or other. Had they not come to terms with them they would soon have found themselves estranged from the worship of the populace, and their priests deprived of gifts and followers. It is probable that the Brahmins, the chosen interpreters of the Divine Will, submitted to this but reluctantly; yet, as Manu himself must admit, 'in all things, necessity constitutes law'.

Shall we now try to conjecture retrospectively what underlying idea or precise need prompted the introduction among the *grāma-devatā* or 'village deities' who were the 'first-born' gods of a symbol representing an elephant? Did peasants living on the outskirts of the forests, or those who hunted in the jungle, or drivers of caravans seek to propitiate him and thus lessen the formidable danger of an encounter? Or did they venerate in him the strength which could clear a path through the densest underwood? It would be useless for us to speculate at such a distance in time upon that question, and to risk a decision. We know too well that in popular superstition every genius or saint has two aspects, one benevolent and one malignant, now causing, now curing, the evils over which he is supposed to preside. Many of the deities of Gaṇeśa's kind, for instance, are at the same time givers and devourers of children, while he himself remains invariably the creator as well as the destroyer of obstacles along all paths, in the realm of the jungle as in the no less intricate world of thought. It is wiser, therefore, to abandon idle supposition and simply to attempt to piece together what scanty information has come down to us through the forgetful ages. Just as some idol is bound to survive the most systematic efforts of the iconoclast, so will an indirect avowal always betray the most hermetic silence. As it is, we have already found in the texts at least two references to the archaic cult of the elephant, and more will probably be discovered in time. We owe the first of these allusions to the belief in the prophylactic virtue of the mantras or magic formulae. A passage of the *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka*, which is quoted below (p. 1, n. 7), did not shrink from adapting the sacred verse of the Vedic *gāyatrī* to native creeds. Admittedly, neither Gaṇeśa-Gaṇapati nor Nandi is expressly mentioned; yet either is easily recognizable by his epithets, while, on the other hand, it looks as if in both cases the allusion still applies to purely animal divinities: an elephant (*Danti*) and a bull (*Vṛiṣa*). The second piece of information, preserved by chance in a Buddhist tale, is quite emphatic on this point. The Commentary of the pāli Jātaka (no. 455) mentions most explicitly a 'feast day of the elephant' (*hatti-maha*), quite analogous to the one still celebrated at Irādatpur in the Fatehpur district, at which many pilgrims gather every year around a stone image (*silā-paṭima*) of the eponymous animal.

On the whole we see no reason to relegate to remote antiquity the date of the final metamorphosis of the elephant-god into the god with the head of an elephant. We know with absolute certainty that in Central India as recently as the fifth century A.D., they carved images of Viṣṇu in the shape of a boar as well as of a man with a boar's head. The transformation of theriomorphic into therianthropomorphic divinities which took place at a very early date in Egypt and the Near East was probably a much later event in Indian iconography. It seems to have been dependent upon the development of art in that country during the centuries immediately preceding and following our era. But on this point as on many others, we must give up all hope of probing farther back than the period of sculpture in stone. Already in the second century B.C., the balustrade of Sāñchī (stūpa II, pillar 86) and that of Bodh-Gayā (pillar 5) show a sylvan goddess (*yakṣī*) with the figure of a woman but with a horse's head: a feature strangely reminiscent of the archaic idol of Demeter worshipped at Phigalia in Arcadia, as described by Pausanias. As to the school of

Gandhāra, it soon produced bronze statues of Viṣṇu in which a human head was to be seen between that of a lion on one side and that of a boar on the other: the prototypes of those carved in Kashmīr where the three faces now formed but one single head. The images of Śiva leaning against his bull, found on the coins of the Kuṣāṇa kings and in the sculptures of Gandhāra, mark, in our opinion, a more advanced stage in the history of anthropomorphism; for there the god, who was originally a *Vṛiṣa*, has completely divested himself of his animal nature and merely retained as his mount (*vāhana*) the bull from which he primitively sprung. Thus we do not find in India a replica of the Minotaur, except at a much later date (seventh century), on the rock sculptures of the Seven Pagodas, where the buffalo-demon Mahiṣāsura, about to succumb to the blows of Devī, assumes the shape of a man with the head of a buffalo. But the therianthropic divinity which interests us most, on account of its kinship with Gaṇeśa, is the goat-genius Nemeṣa or Naigameṣa, who, according to the texts, was either a son or a younger brother of Skanda, and like him first personified some infantile epidemic as well as the antidote to which recourse is had against it. His ambiguous role of scourge at the same time as safeguard for childhood was the very reason why the Jain legend entrusted him with the task of transferring the embryo of the future Jina Mahavīra from the womb of a Brahman woman where it had strayed to that of a woman of noble caste. An inscribed bas-relief of Mathurā, dating from the second century A.D. and alluding to that event, shows us his royal person crowned with a goat's-head; while one is strongly tempted to identify him with the genius, this time of purely animal appearance, carved three centuries earlier on a medallion of the second pillar of the railing at Bodh-Gayā, where a goat stands stock-still on a kind of altar, and apparently turns a deaf ear to the supplications of a mother and her child.

If we may trust such scanty references as these, the definitive creation of Gaṇeśa's type took place towards the beginning of our era; but no tangible evidence handed down to us, and preserved because of the lasting quality of the material employed, dates so far back: there again all that we can do is to review successively scattered pieces of information. The army of Māra on the Northern pillar of the Western gateway of Sāñchī (latter half of first century B.C.) includes an elephant, together with a boar, a buffalo, a goat, a horse, and a lion; but all those demons have still retained their animal forms. Two centuries later, at Amarāvatī, one of the gnomes on the railing seems to bear an elephant's head: however the trunk and the tusks are missing (Pl. 26). The Mathurā School yields us a comparatively early likeness in which the trunk sweeps back in a broad curve, but where there is only one tusk, the right one, and that scarcely visible. Personally, we are convinced that this is an archaic image of Gaṇeśa; his clumsy nudity, however, as well as the total lack of jewellery, gives one the impression that he is hardly yet rising from the rank and file. A frieze of late Āndhra style, recently discovered in Ceylon, shows a more advanced stage of deification (Pl. 22). There Gaṇeśa is represented full face, crouching between two rows of goblins eagerly bringing him food and drink: one of them holds a roll which may be sheaves of rice or sugar-canes, while five others carry as many jugs of his favourite beverage. Incidentally let us note that, on the extreme right of the same frieze, a seventh goblin is represented with broad elephant's ears on each side of his human face, just like those little Atlantes discovered at Jauliān near Taxila, right at the other end of India. For the time being we must wait as late as the fifth century of our era to meet, in the temple of Bhumāra in Central India, the first complete realization of Gaṇeśa's type: the panels of its walls are decorated with numerous gaṇas having either the head of a man or that of a lion, a boar, a monkey, or a parrot; while the ruins of the central cella contained the oldest known representation of Gaṇeśa at last deified (Pl. 3*b*). It may be interesting to note that this idol, like the two mentioned above, has only one pair of arms; according to Professor J. Ph. Vogel, this is also the case with a Gupta statue from Bhītarī noticed by General Cunningham. However, a second image of Gaṇeśa, enshrined in one of the blank dormer-windows at Bhumāra, has four arms. It is the same with the one discovered at Bhītargaon, where the god is depicted on the terra-cotta panels of the temple in an attitude which is not absolutely hieratic, for he seems to be defending his plate of cakes from the unwelcome attentions of a genius in human form—probably his brother Skanda.

Such appear to us, up to the present, to be the débuts of the iconography of Gaṇeśa. The gropings of his early representations reflect his first hesitating steps in the world of divinities of highest rank where the texts will henceforth enable us to follow him. Indeed, the creation of so curiously blended a figure, a stroke of genius on the part of the sculptor, was also a stroke of luck for his model: we have no doubt that the image itself contributed largely to the fame of the god. Yet we must not forget that originally Gaṇeśa was a kind of demon, or, to put it more politely, a jungle genius. That he should become included in the retinue of the 'Great Lord' who, followed by innumerable spirits more or less malignant, was believed to haunt the mountains and forests, was an easy step, and one that seemed natural for him to take, since it is written that 'while Viṣṇu is the God of the Gods, Śiva is the God of the Demons'. To rise in rank until he became commander of those hordes and thus to enter the inner circle of the cortege of Śiva was a justifiable promotion, whether due to seniority or to choice. He might then have remained in this capacity attached to the God and his Goddess, side by side with the bull of the one and the tiger of the other, on the same footing as Timbaru (or Tumburu), king of the Gandharvas and conductor of the divine orchestra, whose horse's head is still found in modern miniatures . . . had his devotees been satisfied with this advancement; but the latter aspired to raise him up to the same level as Skanda, son of Śiva, and thus set themselves a difficult task. The purāṇas faithfully reflect the perplexity in which his composite figure involved them. It will be realized below (p. 6 *et seqq.*) how laborious were their efforts to provide him with a divine ancestry, when it was alternatively claimed that he was begotten by Śiva alone, or by Devī alone; and these legends, depriving him either of a father or of a mother, once admitted, there still remained the awkward question of his elephant's head. How was his divine birth to be reconciled with the abnormal coupling in his body of man and beast? The least that could be done was to declare that this peculiarity was accidental not congenital; and from this again was born another series of myths attempting to give a seemly, if not satisfactory, explanation of an anomaly which might be pardonable in a rustic environment, but was scarcely in keeping with the Olympian summits of Mount Kailāśa. The discrepancies of those tales, even more than their inconsistency, would be enough to prove that they had been invented as an afterthought for the needs of the cause and by less than indifferent scholars. This, however, was of no consequence; for no sooner was Gaṇeśa established on the steps of the throne, so to speak, than the Gāṇapatya sect sought to promote him to the supreme rank, and make him usurp the sovereign power, ousting in his 'Conquest of the Cardinal Points' (*dig-vijaya*) even his putative father Śiva.

As our task consisted in leading Gaṇeśa to the threshold of his august career, we shall leave him now that he is about to enter into the full light of art and literature. Up to what point it is already possible to sketch the broad lines of his proto-history is for the reader to judge. In the penumbra, becoming more obscure as one gropes farther and farther back into the past, we have tried to discern, thanks to some analogies and traditions, the first stage of Gaṇeśa's embryonic existence when he was still the ungainly, but already sacred, image of a genius-elephant. After that long and dim period, comparable in a way to the larva stage in insect life, we then attempted to follow him through his next development which, mysterious as the transformation of the chrysalis, ended in the ultimate type of a genius with the head of an elephant. Undoubtedly the progress of research work and new archaeological discoveries cannot fail to add much, in time, to the frame-work of the present brief analysis, and will lead in a more secure manner to the third and last period, the one described below—the glorious éclat of which, it would be useless to try to deny, is already on the decline owing to the profound changes now taking place in the East. But to our way of thinking, what really matters is the light which Gaṇeśa's ascension throws on the religious evolution of India. It supplies a typical instance of those devotions, in appearance new, in fact extremely old, which one usually groups together under the appellation of Tantrism from the name of the books (*tantra*) in which they are exposed at great length; a most convenient way of designating them, the evasiveness of the term being an excellent reason for avoiding a more precise definition.

When one consults Indian scholars in regard to Tantrism, one would gather from their writings that it was a kind of leprosy which broke out suddenly during the fifth or sixth century of our era, rapidly contaminating the texts as well as the pantheons of the various sects, whether Brahmanic or Buddhist. So it might seem indeed at first glance; but, as Gaṇeśa's concrete example shows, the evil was far deeper and dated much farther back. A vast uprising, a veritable religious revolution, brought forth through the intermediary of the sculptor's chisel and the pandit's calamus a whole set of doctrines and a cohort of deities, just as disquieting the one as the other, that until then had lain hidden and almost unsuspected by archaeologists as well as by philologists. From the depths of India sprang forth those unrestrained magical and spiritualistic divagations as well as those abnormal or even ghastly idols, bringing with them to the surface all the dregs of the old orgiastic rites at the same time as the whole rabble of evil spirits—thus provoking among the historians a not unjustifiable outcry against such a moral, intellectual, and artistic regression. Only it so happened that the tidal wave, meeting the thousand ramifications of the previously established sects, simply brought to each particular channel a new rush of religious fervour. Its rapid division into so many branches was the reason why the fundamental breadth, unity, and antiquity of its overflow became scarcely discernable. It is nevertheless responsible for what was achieved by India during the medieval period and down to modern times in the way of religious literature and iconography. On the other hand, if one sought to claim for it patents of nobility in the early Indian past, it would not be difficult to recognize the precursory symptoms of this movement in the passages of the Atharva-veda which were not entirely disguised under a Brahmanic garb, thus reverting without effort to the pre-Aryan epoch. In short, if we take Gaṇeśa as a witness, Tantrism was not a contagious malady which, at a comparatively recent date, suddenly attacked Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism, and so on; but like them it was a distinct religion, and what is more, by far the oldest and the most widely spread in the peninsula. No wonder that it finally absorbed all the others, forming now the basis as well as the link for the extraordinary medley classified under the general label of Hinduism.

If Gaṇeśa's case helps us to understand the true nature of Tantrism, the new conception thus gained about the latter gives us, in its turn, the possibility of placing his biography more accurately in its real environment; and the astonishing good fortune of the Elephant-headed god immediately loses much of the exceptional character that we might otherwise have felt inclined to give it, his advent becoming only one element of the general reappearance of old superstitions and beliefs. These had remained inveterate but latent, since they were refused the double means of expression and propaganda provided by literature and plastic art. It was largely due to the ever increasing diffusion of the latter that, in the midst of the severe social commotions brought about by the barbaric invasions, they succeeded in getting the upper hand and revealed themselves as completely as they did. Like so many of his kind, fairies or genii, Gaṇeśa, although more fortunate, was merely carried along on the tide of a great upward movement, analogous to that which, since all time, has urged the castes of India to rise to a superior level, yet with the important difference that the lower grades of deities have reached their goal far more rapidly than mere humanity: therefore we ventured to call their ascent a revolution.

This may require an explanation: that a revolution suddenly and inevitably carries the lower strata of the people to the top is undeniable; but it is not unusual for those who have benefited by the upheaval to try to adopt the manner and style of those whom they have supplanted; and Gaṇeśa, the divine Opportunist, did not escape from the common law. If it is true that certain among his representations, by their unseemly or gruesome character, still betray some regrettable remains of vulgarity, the ex-Demon of the Jungle assumed more and more the aspect of a *bon bourgeois*. We soon find his corpulent figure at the entrance of temples, opposite to that of Kubera (otherwise Mahā-kāla or Jambhala), the Dispenser of Riches. Except for their faces, the two gods resemble each other like twin brothers; and to the worshippers passing to and fro, the one murmurs: 'May you be rich!' while the other whispers in their ear: 'May you be successful in your enterprises!' What could be more reassuring to well-to-do people? Let us mention, by the way, that Gaṇeśa's rat, upon which the mythologists have built such far-fetched theories (p. 1), is simply the counterpart of the mongoose of Kubera; as we know with certainty that the mongoose symbolizes a well-lined purse, it is more than probable that the rat evokes the well-filled granary where it is always an assiduous guest. Indeed we meet him again just as busily engaged near the bales of rice on which the merry Dai-Koku, the Mahākāla of the Japanese, is crouching.

In short, the aspect under which the 'Prince of Obstacles' likes to reveal himself is, as a rule, wholly benevolent. The great Indian scholar, to whom it would have fallen to write this Preface had not his sudden death left it for us to fulfil his promise, summed up perfectly the impression that the images of the Elephant-faced God make upon us, when he wrote (Sylvain Lévi, *Le Népal*, 1, pp. 383–4), that Gaṇeśa with his accessories forms a most captivating whole: 'His strange but good-natured physiognomy arrests our attention as well as our sympathy'—an opinion which the following pages will prove to be true.

A. FOUCHER.

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A. FOUCHER.

GAṆEŚA

He who causes and removes Obstacles.

He who withdraws or bestows Success.

He who ignores or fulfils all Desires.

VARIOUS NAMES

Vakra-Tuṇḍa . . .	He of the Twisted Trunk.
Eka-Danta . . .	He of the one Tusk.
Vināyaka	Remover of Obstacles.
Gaṇapati	Leader of the Gaṇa.
Vighneśvara . . .	Lord of Obstacles.
Akhu-Ratha . . .	He who rides on a rat.
Siddhidātā . . .	Bestower of Perfection.
Heramba	Protector.
Dvi-Dehaka . . .	Double-bodied.
Lambodara . . .	He of the Full Belly.
Gajānana	He of the Elephant-Face.
Bāla-Gaṇapati . . .	The child Gaṇapati.

Tamil: Piḷḷaiyar (Noble child).
Tibetan: ts'ogs-bdag.
bgegs med p'ai bdag po.
Burmese: Mahā-pienne.
Mongolian: Totkhar-oun Khaghan.

Cambodian: prāh Kenès.
Chinese: Kuan-shi t'ien.
Japanese: Shō-ten.
Vināyakśa.
Kwanzan-shō.
Kangi-ten.

CONSORTS: Buddhi and Siddhi

ŚAKTI: Lakṣmī[1]

Mudrā: vitarka, tarjanī.
Colours: red, yellow, red and yellow, white.
Symbols: broken tusk, *modaka*, bowl of *batasa*, water-vessel, celestial creeper, *vigora* fruit (citron), axe, rosary, elephant-goad, pomegranate, radish, stylus and book, *jambu* (wood-apple).
Vīja: gaṅ. (गङ).
Vāhana: rat or lion.

[1] not Śrī-Lakṣmī.

GAṆAPATI-STOTRA

Nārada uvāca:

1. Praṇamya śirasā devaṁ Gaurīputraṁ Vināyakam
Bhaktāvāsaṁ smaren nityam āyuḥkāmārthasiddhaye,

2. Prathamaṁ *Vakratuṇḍaṁ* ca *Ekadantaṁ* dvitīyakam,
Tṛtīyaṁ *Kṛṣṇapiṅgākṣaṁ Gajavaktraṁ* caturthakam,

3. *Lambodaraṁ* pañcamaṁ ca ṣaṣṭhaṁ *Vikaṭam* eva ca,
Saptamaṁ *Vighnarājaṁ* ca *Dhūmravarṇaṁ* tathāṣṭamam,

4. Navamaṁ *Bhālacandraṁ* ca daśamaṁ tu *Vināyakam,*
Ekādaśaṁ *Gaṇapatiṁ* dvādaśaṁ tu *Gajānanam.*

5. Dvādaśaitāni nāmāni trisandhyaṁ yaḥ paṭhen naraḥ
Na ca vighnabhayaṁ tasya sarvasiddhikaraṁ param.

6. Vidyārthī labhate vidyāṁ dhanārthī labhate dhanam,
Putrārthī labhate putrān mokṣārthī labhate gatim.

7. Japed Gaṇapatistotraṁ ṣaḍbhir māsaiḥ phalaṁ labhet,
Saṁvatsareṇa siddhiṁ ca labhate nātra saṁśayaḥ.

8. Aṣṭānāṁ brāhmaṇānāṁ ca likhitvā yaḥ samarpayet,
Tasya vidyā bhavet sadyo Gaṇeśasya prasādataḥ.

Iti Śrī-Nāradapurāṇe Saṁkaṭanāśanaṁ nāma
Gaṇapatistotraṁ saṁpūrṇam.[1]

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[1] Published in the *Bṛhat-stotra-ratnākara* by the Śrī-Veṅkateśvara Press (Bombay, 1885) p. 5, and separately, with slight variants, by the Nirṇaya-sāgar Press (Bombay, 1888).

HYMN TO GAṆEŚA

Nārada said:

1. With head bowed, let him unceasingly worship in his mind the god Vināyaka, the son of Gaurī,
The refuge of his devotees, for the complete attainment of longevity, amorous desires and wealth,

2. Firstly, as the *One with the Twisted Trunk*; secondly, as the *One with the Single Tusk*;
Thirdly, as the *One with the Fawn-coloured Eyes*; fourthly, as the *One with the Elephant's Mouth*;

3. Fifthly, as the *Pot-bellied One*; sixthly, as the *Monstrous One*;
Seventhly, as the *King of Obstacles*; eighthly, as the *Smoke-coloured One*;

4. Ninthly, as the *Moon-crested One*; tenthly, as the *Remover of Hindrances*;
Eleventhly, as the *Lord of the Hordes*; twelfthly, as the *One with the Elephant's Face.*

5. Whosoever repeats those twelve names at dawn, noon, and sunset,
For him there is no fear of failure, nay, there is constant good fortune.

6. He who desires knowledge obtains knowledge; he who desires wealth obtains wealth;
He who desires sons obtains sons; he who desires salvation obtains the Way.

7. Whosoever mutters the hymn to Gaṇapati reaches his aim in six months,
And in a year he reaches perfection, on this point there is no doubt.

8. Whosoever makes eight copies of it, and has them distributed to as many Brahmans,
He reaches knowledge instantaneously, by the grace of Gaṇeśa.

Here ends, in the holy Nārada-Purāṇa, the hymn to Gaṇapati called the 'Destroyer of Difficulties'.

KINDLY TRANSLATED FOR THE AUTHOR BY
MADAME E. BAZIN-FOUCHER.

ABBREVIATIONS

USED IN THE NOTES

I.B.I.	Bhaṭṭacharyya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*. London, 1924.
I. of B. and B.S.	Bhaṭṭaśali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*. Dacca, 1929.
B. of the B.M. of F.A.	*Bulletin of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.*
B.C.A.I.	*Bulletin de la Commission Archéologique de l'Indochine.*
B.E.F.E.O.	*Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient.*
P.R.F. of N.I.	Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*. London, 1896.
H. and B.	Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*. London, 1921.
Antiq. I.T.	Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*. Calcutta, 1914.
Art G-B.G.	Foucher, *L'Art Gréco-Buddhique du Gandhara*. Paris, 1900.
H. del'E-O.	Grousset, *Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient*. Paris, 1929.
Myth. Buddh.	Grünwedel, *Mythologie du Buddhisme*. Leipzig, 1900.
H.F. of G. and G.	Gupte, 'Harvest Festivals of Gaurī and Gaṇesh', *Indian Antiquary*, Nov. 1906.
Encycl. of R. and E.	*Hastings's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.*
I.H.Q.	*The Indian Historical Quarterly.*
J.R.A.S.	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
A.S. de l'Inde	Jouveau-Dubreuil, *Archéologie du Sud de l'Inde*. Paris, 1914.
R.N.A. of A.H.M.	Kennedy, *Researches into the Nature and Affinity of Ancient and Hindu Mythology*. London, 1831.
E. of H.I.	Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*. Madras, 1916.
B.G. in B.	Ray, *Brahmanical Gods in Burma*. Calcutta, 1932.
S.I.I. of G. and G.	Sastri, *South Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses*. Madras, 1916.
A. of I. and J.	Vogel, *The Relation between the Art of India and Java*. London, 1926.
B. and H.	Monier-Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism*. London, 1887.

ŚRĪ GAṆEŚĀYA NAMAḤ

CHAPTER I

INDIA: ORIGIN OF GAṆEŚA. GAṆEŚA IN INDIAN LITERATURE

GAṆEŚA, Lord of the Gaṇas,[1] although among the latest deities to be admitted to the Brahmanic pantheon, was, and still is, the most universally adored of all the Hindu gods, and his image is found in practically every part of India. The popularity of Gaṇeśa extended to Nepal and Chinese Turkestan and crossed the seas to Java, Bali, and Borneo, while his worship was not unknown in Tibet, Burma, Siam, China, Indo-China, and Japan.

Certain authorities believe that Gaṇeśa was originally a Dravidian deity worshipped by the aboriginal populations of India who were sun-worshippers; and that Gaṇeśa on his *vāhana*, the rat, symbolized a sun-god[2] overcoming the animal, which, in ancient mythology, was a symbol of the night.[3]

Others are of the opinion that his elephant-head and his mount, the rat, indicate that, although he may have been taken over from indigenous mythology, he belonged originally to an animal cult.[4] This seems a plausible theory, since his image is found in Hindu temples worshipped in company with the animal avatars of Viṣṇu.

It is not known whether Gaṇeśa is to be looked upon as an original or a derivative deity; but it is probable that he was primarily the totem of a Dravidian tribe. The primitive effigies were often animal-headed; and the elephant, being the largest animal in India as well as the shrewdest, would assuredly have figured among them.

We do not know what was his ancient Dravidian epithet; but if we judge from the earliest sanskrit name that is known to us, Ekadanta, he was probably designated as He of One Tusk. The Dravidian words *paḷḷu* and *peḷḷa* both signify tooth, tusk of the elephant.[5] It therefore seems possible that his Tamil name, Piḷḷaiyar, is a corruption of his ancient Dravidian title although, in its present form, there is no meaning of 'tusk'. *Piḷḷe* is the Tamil word for child and Piḷḷaiyar means 'noble child'; but Bagchi is of the opinion that *piḷḷe* originally meant the 'young of the elephant', for the Pali word *piḷḷaka* has the significance of 'a young elephant'.[6]

In a collection of Vedic *mantras* in the *Taittirīya-āraṇyaka*,[7] there is a mystic prayer addressed to a god, Dantin, He of the Tusk (danta), which seems to refer to the Elephant-faced god, for the *mantra* comes in a suite of *mantras* addressed to two deities Kārttikeya and Nandi, the bull, with whom Gaṇeśa is often associated not only in the *purāṇas* but in the most ancient Indian sculptures of the deity. Besides which, the commentator, Sāyaṇa, apparently indicates an elephant-faced god when he explains that he was possessed of a *tuṇḍa* (nose, beak, trunk) which was *vakra* (twisted, curved); and that he carried a pile of corn, a club, and a sugar cane, all of which might be attributes of Gaṇeśa.[1] He was known later in puranic texts as Vakratuṇḍa or 'He of the Curved Trunk', for the epithet is to be found in a list of twelve names of Gaṇeśa mentioned in a *Gaṇapati-stotra*[2] for his special worship; while in the *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra*,[3] he is addressed as Raktatuṇḍa or 'He of the Red Trunk'.[4]

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[1] The 'troops' of demi-gods, attendants of Śiva.

[2] There is a form of Gaṇeśa in Nepal called Sūrya-Gaṇapati; v. p. 39. In India he was sometimes represented accompanying the god Sūrya; p. 31.

[3] *Zoological Mythology*, Gubernatis, p. 68, II.

[4] *P.R. and F.N.I.*, by W. Crooke, p. 287.

[5] *Notes sur des Villes Indiennes*, Przyluski, B. de la S. d. L. d. P., tome 27, fasc. 111, no. 83.

[6] 'Some Linguistic Notes', *The Ind. Hist. Quart.*, vol. ix, no. I, March 1933.

[7] *tatpuruṣāya vidmahe vakratuṇḍāya dhīmahi tan no Dantiḥ pracodayāt* (*Taitt.-ār.* x. 1. 5), kindly translated by Mr. Sylvain Lévi.

Although he is apparently referred to in the above Vedic text, he is not to be found in the Assembly of Vedic deities, at least, not under any name that is known to us. The reason for this may be that in ancient times he was possibly an unimportant village god, worshipped exclusively by the lower classes. In fact, a verse attributed to the ancient version of the Laws of Manu[5] seems to indicate his lowly origin, for it runs as follows: 'Śiva is the god of the Brahmans while Gaṇeśa is the god of the *śūdras*',[6] who were the aboriginal population.

There is no ancient legend, that is, earlier than the *purāṇas*, which explains why he was possessed of only one tusk; but it seems to have had an important significance since his title 'Ekadanta' has followed him down to the present day. The explanation may possibly be found in his connexion, at a very early date, with the harvest ceremonies; and his promotion, in time, to the important role of 'Lord of the Harvest'. The rites and ceremonies as well as the deities associated with the Harvest Festival were full of symbolic meaning; and undoubtedly the form of the Ekadanta was invested with mystic significance. It seems natural that the one tusk of the Harvest Lord, which gave him his ancient name, should symbolically stand for the most important implement of the harvest, the plough, especially as the word *ekadanta* may be translated: 'one tusk' or 'plough-share'.[7]

As the Elephant-faced god seems only to have been known to the uneducated classes up to the sixth century, it is not surprising to find that he does not figure in the Epic pantheon of deities. Even the name of Gaṇeśa or Gaṇeśvara (Lord of the Gaṇas) which is found both in the north and south India recension of the *Mahābhārata*[8] may not be attributed to him until much later, for it is the title of Śiva, his reputed father in puranic myths; nor does the epithet Gaṇapati[9] found in the Rig-Veda (II. 23. 1) refer to him but to the important Vedic deity Brahmaṇaspati,[10] 'father of the gods'. Certain Indian *paṇḍits*, however, look upon Gaṇeśa as a derivative of this Vedic deity. Przyluski, on the contrary, is of the opinion that Śiva and Gaṇeśa were originally one and the same god; that is, that although Gaṇeśa does not figure in the *Mahābhārata as distinct from Śiva* (Gaṇeśvara), he was none the less an aspect of Śiva and might therefore have been considered identical with Rudra-Śiva, even although he was introduced into the Indian pantheon as Gaṇeśa, Lord of the Gaṇas.[1]

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[1] Several of the Śakti-Gaṇapati carry these attributes.

[2] See above.

[3] Trans. Avalon, p. 251.

[4] Red is the usual colour of Gaṇeśa.

[5] *The Ordinance of Manu*, Burnett and Hopkins.

[6] *B. and H.*, Monier-Williams, note p. 212.

[7] *Harvest Festivals of G. and G.*, Gupte, *I.A.*, vol. xxxv, Nov. 1906.

[8] Authorities vary as to the date of the *Mahābhārata* between 400 B.C. and A.D. 400.

[9] *Gaṇānāṃ Gaṇapatiḥ.*

[10] Or *Bṛhaspati.*

The *gaṇas*, attendants of Śiva, were benevolent deities of nine classes dwelling on Mount Kailāśa; and mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* in connexion with the *gaṇas* was another group called *vināyakas* who, although malevolent, were not insensible to propitiation. According to Bhandarkar, propitiatory rites and ceremonies in their worship were set up before the Christian era.[2] In the *Mānavagṛhya-sūtra* the Vināyakas are mentioned as a group of four gods, but in later texts they are referred to as 'one' deity; and in the *Atharvaśiras-upanishad*, Rudra is identified with *one* Vināyaka. In the *Smṛti* of Yājñavalkya, the group of four *vināyakas* was addressed as 'one' god, who was looked upon as the son of Ambikā.[3] Keith is of the opinion that this deity is akin to the later god, Gaṇeśa. At any rate, puranic myth explains that the group of four *vināyakas* was merged into one definite deity whom Rudra (Śiva) appointed 'Leader of the Gaṇas' or Gaṇa-pati; and *Gaṇapati-Vināyaka*,[4] who may be considered the earliest form of Gaṇeśa as known in the *purāṇas*, was given the role of creating difficulties and obstructions if not properly propitiated. According to Bhandarkar, the cult of Gaṇapati-Vināyaka may already have been set up by the end of the sixth century.[5] The earliest mention of the demon-god is in the *Smṛti* of Yājñavalkya which was possibly written in the sixth century;[6] but no reference to Gaṇeśa as an *elephant-headed* deity is to be found until the eighth, when, in the opening stanzas of the *Mālatīmādhava*, he is described as having the face of an elephant.[7]

Although the Elephant-faced god is not referred to in either of the texts of the two Hindu Epics—the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*—we find a Gaṇeśa distinct from Śiva (although also called *Gaṇeśāna*) with god-like qualities in the introduction to the north India recension of the *Mahābhārata*.

He is referred to as scribe to the sage Vyāsa, writing down with super-human rapidity Vyāsa's dictation of the *Mahābhārata*. There is reference to this legend in the *Bālabhārata*, a poem written in the ninth century, where Vālmīki, author of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, on meeting Vyāsa, asks him how the *Mahābhārata* is progressing. The sage replies that after severe austerities he has been able to secure Mahā-Gaṇeśa as his scribe, &c.[8]

Winternitz believes that the legend was known long before the ninth century and was not inserted into the introduction to the north India revision of the Hindu Epic until 150 years later.[9] In the Introduction to the south India recension of the *Mahābhārata*, there is neither mention of Gaṇeśa nor reference to the legend.

Although he is often met with in the *purāṇas*, Gaṇeśa is never presented in India as a scribe.[1] No ancient Indian frescos or sculptures depict him in this role,[2] nor should we know whether Gaṇeśa, the scribe, is to be identified or not with Gaṇeśa, the elephant-faced leader of the *gaṇas*, were it not for two miniatures, one Nepalese and the other Rajput, wherein he is represented with the face of an elephant and unquestionably, as a scribe.

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[1] Letter to the author.

[2] *Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 149.

[3] In the Vedas Ambikā was called the sister of Rudra, but in later texts she was identified with Umā (Pārvatī).

[4] *Vaiṣṇavism*, Bhandarkar, p. 148.

[5] Idem, p. 149.

[6] Idem, p. 148. According to Rao the earliest mention of the demon-god was in the *Aitarēya Brāhmaṇa*, i. 21; v. *H.I.*, vol. i, part i, p. 46.

[7] *Vaiṣṇavism*, Bhandarkar, p. 179.

[8] This legend was narrated by Indian *paṇḍits* to Al-Bīrūnī in the tenth century; *India*, trans. Sachau, vol. i, p. 134.

[9] *J.R.A.S.*, April 1898, p. 380.

The Nepalese miniature[3] is in the *Piṅgalāmālā*, a tantric manuscript of the thirteenth century now in the Nepal State Library. The painting is on one of the board-covers holding the manuscript leaves. Gaṇeśa is seated cross-legged on the rat with the right hand holding the broken tusk point downward as if it were a stylus. Very likely, as the text is Tantric, he is represented in this instance as scribe to *Śiva*, for in the *Gāyatrī-tantra*[4] he is referred to as writing down the Tantras to the dictation of his father, Śiva.

The second miniature is a Rajput painting of the seventeenth century, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts,[5] where Gaṇeśa is depicted four-armed standing before the worshipping Vyāsa. In the upper right-hand corner is Brahmā, at whose suggestion Vyāsa has appealed to Gaṇeśa. The text relates[6] that while Vyāsa was worshipping Brahmā, the god Gaṇeśa suddenly appeared before him, whereupon he worshipped Gaṇeśa, who then consented to become his scribe. In the lower left-hand corner is the scene of dictation. Gaṇeśa, seated, has placed the water-vessel before him and has taken the rosary in his lower right hand. As the upper right is still in *vitarka-mudrā* and the upper left holds the axe, it would seem that Gaṇeśa had finished his task of amanuensis and was presenting, with his normal left hand, the completed text to Vyāsa.

There is a divergence of opinion as to how Gaṇeśa, 'Remover of Obstacles', gained this reputation of 'Patron of Letters'.

Prabodh Chandra Bagchi[7] suggests that Gaṇeśa was associated with writing because of a confusion in regard to the word '*siddhi*'. From very ancient times, the Hindu alphabet was called '*siddham*' and the enumeration of the alphabet began with the word *siddhi*. As one of the epithets of Gaṇeśa is Siddhidātā, 'Giver of Success', he believes it to be probable that his association with the word gave rise to the legends depicting him as a scribe.

Bhandarkar[8] is of the opinion that his reputation for wisdom was born of a confusion between Gaṇeśa and the Vedic god of Wisdom, Bṛhaspati; while Rao[9] identifies him with the celestial *guru*, Bṛhaspati, himself. It is interesting to note here that Bṛhaspati, an important god in the Rig-Veda, is described as carrying the axe or 'golden hatchet', an attribute particularly ascribed to Gaṇeśa, and that he also was referred to as Gaṇapati.

Coomaraswamy[10] attributes his reputation as Patron of Letters to the double meaning of the word *gaṇa* which, besides being the name of the followers of Śiva, is also the 'technical designation of early lists or collections of related works'. But whatever may have brought about his association with writing, Gaṇeśa's reputation as Patron of Letters was sufficiently established to last through centuries, and no pious Hindu would risk publishing any work without asking his benign patronage.

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[1] v. p. 4.

[2] v. Pl. 26 from J. Coedès, *Bronzes Khmèrs.* Ars Asiatica, v, Pl. xv.

[3] v. Pl. 1 (*c*). Kindness of Mr. Bagchi.

[4] *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra*, Avalon, p. 4, note 7.

[5] v. Pl. 1 (*a*). Kindness of Mr. Coomaraswamy.

[6] *B. of the B.M. of F.A.*, Coomaraswamy, vol. xxvi, p. 30.

[7] Letter to the author.

[8] *Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 149.

[9] *H.I.*, vol. i, part i, p. 45.

[10] *B. of the B.M. of F.A.*, vol. xxvi, p. 30.

The growing popularity of Gaṇeśa was not founded, however, on his title of Protector of the Literati. Under the name of Gaṇapati, he became a most important deity toward the tenth century, when a mystic and powerful sect, the Gāṇapatyas, established his worship to the exclusion of every other Hindu god, even of his reputed parents, Śiva and Pārvatī. Temples were erected to him alone, with his *vāhana*, the rat, guarding the entrance as did Nandi, the bull, the temples dedicated to Śiva. The largest one built in honour of Gaṇeśa was a rock-cut temple near Trichinopoly known as Ucchi-piḷḷaiyar Kovil.[1]

The cult of the Gāṇapatyas, who bore as a distinguishing mark a red circle on the forehead, was esoteric; and Gaṇeśa, looked upon as a Supreme Deity, was believed to be superior to Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, as may be seen in the following Gāṇapatya hymn used in his worship.[2]

Oṁ laṁ: Praise be to thee, Gaṇapati!
Thou art the visible Reality.... Thou art the Creator, the Preserver, the Destroyer,
  the Supreme Brahmā, the Spirit Manifest. The Universe is born from thee....
  The Universe is manifested in thee: earth, water, fire, air and ether.[3]
Thou art Brahmā, thou art Viṣṇu, thou art Rudra. Thou art superior to the
  Three Bodies (Trimūrti).
Oṁ, praise be to thee, Gaṇapati!

The word *oṁ*, which precedes every Brahman *mantra*, is composed of a-u-m; *a* for Brahmā, *u* for Viṣṇu, and *m* for Śiva. It is symbolized by the sanskrit sign ॐ. The sign attached on the right is called 'Gaṇeśa's trunk'.[4] Gaṇeśa is thus associated with Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, since no rite, except those dedicated to Brahman, may be performed without his invocation.

Although in certain *purāṇas* as well as in their *upapurāṇas*, Gaṇeśa was raised to the rank of Creator, higher than the Trimūrti, in other puranic accounts such as the *Skanda-purāṇa*, he was described as owing his popularity, if not his very existence, to a dispute between Śiva and Pārvatī, fomented by a host of minor deities.

The legend runs as follows: Śiva had instituted to himself a special worship at Somnāth[5] and in order to gain popularity with the masses he had promised that every one could count on going directly into the heavens of the gods, who adored him at this special shrine with all the prescribed sacrifices and offerings.

Indra and the minor gods resented the arrival in their midst of the hordes of Śiva's faithful adorers such as 'women, barbarians, *śūdras*, and other workers of sin' who were not only without proper qualifications to be there, but were originally destined for the seven hells.[6]

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[1] *Ind. Antiquary*, 1877, Burgess, p. 361.

[2] *Gaṇapati-upanishad*, kindly translated for the author by Mr. S. Lévi.

[3] v. p. 21.

[4] Kindness of Mr. Sylvain Lévi.

[5] Or Someśvara.

[6] *Hindu Mythology*, Kennedy, p. 354.

In great indignation, the minor deities, led by Indra, repaired to Mount Kailāśa, where dwelt the Lord of the Trident, Śiva, and protested against this incursion into their midst, saying that they were practically turned out of their own heavens by beings who wandered wherever they pleased, claiming that they were greater than the gods themselves.[1] They implored the All-powerful Śiva to find some obstacle by which these undeserving beings might be hindered from causing them so much annoyance.

From here on, there are several versions of the legend regarding the creation of Gaṇeśa as *Vighneśvara*,[2] 'Lord of Obstacles'.

(1) Śiva, much perturbed by the unforeseen consequences of his decree, fell into deep meditation, and while immersed in profound thought a great brilliance emanated from his forehead[3] and there sprang into existence a wondrous being endowed with all the qualities of Śiva. When the goddess Umā (Pārvatī) saw the surpassingly beautiful youth whom Śiva had created of his own will and without her participation, she uttered the following powerful curse: 'May thy head resemble that of an elephant and thy body be deformed by a huge belly.'

Śiva seems to have accepted this curse as final, and without demur acknowledged the elephant-headed youth as his son in the following terms: 'Thy name shall be Gaṇeśa, Vināyaka, Vighnarāja, the son of Śiva. Success and disappointment shall proceed from thee. Thou shalt be worshipped and *invoked before the other gods on all occasions*[4] or otherwise the object and prayer of him who omits to do so, shall fail.'[5]

The second version eliminates all participation of Śiva in the creation of Gaṇeśa.

(2) Śiva, after listening to the supplications of Indra and the minor gods, replied that he was unable to grant their request, for having given his promise to his faithful followers worshipping at his shrine of Someśvara, it could not be withdrawn. But, he suggested, why not appeal to the goddess Pārvatī, his consort, who might find some means of extricating them from their present predicament?

Indra then turned to the goddess Pārvatī, and kneeling before her with bowed head and clasped hands, addressed her as follows: 'Praise to thee, O, Supreme of Goddesses. Supporter of the Universe. O Lotus-eyed. O Beloved of Śiva. Grant us thy aid and save us from this fearful dilemma.'[6]

Pārvatī, moved with compassion, brought into existence a 'Creator of Obstacles' (Vighneśvara); but legends differ as to the mode of creation. The *Skanda-purāṇa* has it that, after gently rubbing her body, Pārvatī produced a youth with four arms and the head of an elephant. There is a curious version of the legend which runs as follows:[7] Taking the unguents with which she anointed herself, Pārvatī mixed with them the impurities from her body; and repairing to the mouth of the sacred river Gaṅgā, where dwelt the elephant-headed *rākṣasī* Mālinī, she offered her the potion. The *rākṣasī* accepted the unguents, and after drinking them she gave birth to a male child with five elephant-heads. Pārvatī claimed the child as her offspring and Śiva, accepting him as the son of Pārvatī, willed the five heads to be one and proclaimed him 'Remover of Obstacles'.

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[1] *Skanda-purāṇa*.

[2] Vighneśa, Vighnapati, Avighnapati, Vighnarāja.

[3] *Varāha-purāṇa*. According to Rao, Gaṇeśa was the 'akasic' or etherial part of Śiva. He was said to be 'mind-born'.

[4] Exception was, however, made in funeral ceremonies.

[5] *Varāha-purāṇa*.

[6] *H.I.*, Rao, vol. i, part i, p. 43.

[7] 'Brahmanism', Jacobi, *E. of R. and E.*, ed. Hastings, p. 807.

From another source,[1] we learn that with the oil and ointments used in her bath, she formed, with the impurities of her body, the image of a youth with the face of an elephant; and sprinkling the image with water from the sacred Gaṅgā, it sprang into life. Whereupon Pārvatī, turning to Indra and the gods, explained that she had created this wondrous being for the sole purpose of putting obstacles in the path of all those who wished to worship at the shrine of Śiva and 'thus shall they fall into the seven hells'.

To Gaṇeśa she gave special instructions that by the allurement of their wives, children, possessions, as well as with the tempting of riches, he was to persuade would-be pilgrims to the shrine of Somnāth, to give up their project. 'But,' she added, 'from those that propitiate thee by the following hymn, do thou remove all difficulties and allow them to worship at the shrine of Śiva.'

The hymn referred to by the goddess is the following: 'Oṁ, I praise thee, O Lord of Difficulties. . . . Gaṇapati, invincible, and giver of Victory. Opposer of Obstacles to the success of men who do not worship thee. I praise thee, O Gaṇeśa.'

Indra and the gods, overjoyed at the creation of a Lord of Obstacles, withdrew to their heavens, freed from all fear of further incursions of mere mankind.

There are certain accounts that eliminate both Śiva and Pārvatī from participation in the creation of Gaṇeśa who was looked upon by certain worshippers as a manifestation of Kṛiṣṇa in human form,[2] and it is interesting to note that Kṛiṣṇa in the *Mahābhārata* is referred to as 'Remover of Obstacles'.[3]

According to the devotees of this doctrine, Pārvatī, in despair at having no offspring from Śiva, undertook to perform the *paṇyakavrata* or worship of Śiva which consisted in making offerings of flowers, fruits, &c., at his shrine daily for a year. But although she faithfully accomplished the prescribed rites, she remained childless.

One day, plunged in deep grief because her request had remained ungranted, she heard a voice from the heavens telling her to go to her private apartments where she would find her son (who was in reality a manifestation of Kṛiṣṇa). Great was her joy on hearing the message; and repairing to her private apartments she found a beautiful youth whom she and Śiva accepted as their son. In honour of the event they invited all the gods to a great feast for the purpose of looking upon the wondrous youth. Śani (Saturn) was the only god who kept his eyes fixed persistently on the ground. Pārvatī reproached him with this and bade him gaze upon her beautiful son. Hardly had he raised his eyes when the head of the youth separated from his body and disappeared into Goloka, the heaven of Kṛiṣṇa.[4]

The gods in despair threw themselves on the ground weeping and wailing at the disaster, but Viṣṇu, mounting on Garuḍa, his *vāhana*, flew away to the river Puṣpabhadra, where he found an elephant asleep with its head turned to the north; and cutting off the head, he flew back again and placed it on the headless child (Bāla-Gaṇeśa), who sprang into life, to the great joy of Śiva, Pārvatī, and the host of gods.

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[1] *Matsya-purāṇa.*

[2] *Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa.* v. Rao, *I.I.*, vol. i, part i, p. 46.

[3] *Epic Mythology*, Hopkins, p. 207, note 1.

[4] There are several variations of this part of the legend.

The devotees of the Kṛiṣṇa-Gaṇeśa cult represented Bāla-Gaṇeśa in the attitude of the child Kṛiṣṇa crawling with one hand raised and the other posed on the ground,[1] but with this difference—that the child Gaṇeśa was represented elephant-faced and with four arms.[2] In their religious ardour, they took over the *Bhagavad-gītā*, inserting the name of Gaṇeśa wherever occurred that of Kṛiṣṇa, and called it *Gaṇeśa-gītā*.[3]

According to certain accounts, the elephant, whose head was cut off by Viṣṇu, was the son of Indra's *vāhana*, while other legends give Indra's mount itself, the elephant Airāvata; but this seems improbable since the *vāhana* of Indra, according to puranic myth, was represented with three trunks.

There is, however, still another puranic legend which describes Śiva as explaining to Gaṇeśa why he is *Gajānana* or elephant-faced, in the following terms: 'I, in company with Pārvatī once retired to the forest on the slopes of the Himālaya to enjoy each other's company, when we saw a female elephant making herself happy with a male elephant. This excited our passion and we decided to enjoy ourselves in the form of elephants. I became a male elephant and Pārvatī, a female elephant and we pleased ourselves; as a result you were born with the face of an elephant.'[4]

Here, we have Gaṇeśa, the son of both Śiva and Pārvatī; and this seems to have been the popularly accepted version of his creation.

Gaṇeśa figured not only in the above puranic myths but in many mystic and magic texts, both Brahmanic and Buddhist, from the fifth century onwards. *Stotras* were offered in his praise such as the hymn found in the Tandjur[5] where he is addressed as the great hero, conqueror of Māra, without equal, incomparable, great magician, king of incantations, master of secret formulas. 'To the Lord with the trunk of an Elephant, homage!'

He was invoked in tantric *sādhanas* or mystic formulas for the invocation of a deity when he was to be visualized with three eyes and many arms, and in forms unknown in paintings or sculptures, such as in the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana*,[6] where, as Vajra-Gaṇapati, he is described as holding a *vajra* and a sword; and as seated on a toad instead of his usual rat. He is often found in *dhāraṇīs*, that is, magic charms or spells where, as in the *Śāradātilaka-tantra*,[7] he is associated with triangles and circles. Unfortunately most of the *dhāraṇīs* in this *tantra* are not suitable for publication. There are other *dhāraṇīs* where he is referred to as being ignominiously trodden under foot by the goddess Aparājitā[8] or by other gods or goddesses. *Mantras*, or short hymns of invocation believed to have mystic or magic virtues, were addressed to him; and like the other Tantric gods, he was allotted a *vīja*, that is, a mystic syllable by which he might be invoked. The Tantric *vīja* of Gaṇeśa was: gaṅ (गङ).

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[1] v. Pl. 15 (*b*).

[2] v. Pl. 15 (*c*). Kindness of Mr. Campbell of the India Museum, London.

[3] v. *Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, Dawson.

[4] *H.I.*, Rao, vol. i, part i.

[5] 83, 94^{v}. Kindly translated by Mr. Sylvain Lévi.

[6] *Mss.* in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Sanskrit 59, p. 75. Kindly translated by Mr. S. Lévi.

[7] Kindly translated by Mr. Bhaṭṭasali.

[8] v. p. 43.

In spite of his apparent popularity in the Tantras, he was, nevertheless, referred to as one to whom the secrets of the tantric mysteries may not be revealed. In the *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra*, for example, when Pārvatī, the primordial *śakti*, asks of Śiva: 'Who else but thee, O Lord of the Three Worlds, is able to solve these doubts of mine? Thou who knowest all', Śiva replies: 'What is that thou sayest, O Great Wise One and Beloved of my Heart? I will tell thee anything, be it ever so bound in mystery, even that which should not be said before Gaṇeśa and Skanda. . . .'[1] The author knows of no other text where Skanda is thus associated with his brother Gaṇeśa, who, unlike Skanda, seems never to have been admitted to the Tantric mysteries. In the Kula[2] rites of initiation, for instance, Gaṇeśa was first supplicated to remove all obstacles to the success of the initiation, after which he was invited to depart by the following *mantra* of dismissal: 'Lord of Obstacles, pardon me!'[3]; and not until his supposed departure had taken place were the mystic rites of initiation begun. It seems apparent from this that he was looked upon as a god to be feared until properly propitiated; but the question arises as to why Gaṇeśa, alone of all the gods, should be excluded from the Tantric mysteries, and especially, from the Kula rites of initiation, when the group of 'Divine Mothers', with whom, as will be seen below, he was always associated, was not only admitted to the mysteries, but was worshipped several times during the Kula ceremonies. As a matter of fact, very little is known of Gaṇeśa in the Tantras and not until more Tantric texts are accessible for study will it be possible to determine the exact position of Gaṇeśa in relation to the other gods who were worshipped in the mysteries, or to find the key to this puzzling Tantric aspect of the Elephant-faced god.

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[1] Trans. Avalon, p. 5.

[2] *Śakti* worship.

[3] *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra*, trans. Avalon, p. 251. The formula: '*Vighnarāja, Kṣamasveti!*' is given in the commentary. (Kindness of Mr. Burnett.)

CHAPTER II

INDIA: GAṆEŚA IN ICONOGRAPHY FROM HINDU TEXTS AND IMAGES

THERE is no trace of a Gaṇeśa cult in India before the fifth century A.D., although, as we have seen above in the Vedic *mantra* addressed to the 'One with the Curved Trunk' (Vakra-Tuṇḍa), a deity with the face of an elephant was known long before the Gupta period. Nor is there reason to put faith in the tradition according to which his worship was carried from India to Nepal in the third century B.C. by the daughter of the Buddhist king Aśoka.[1] There would seem, however, to be conclusive evidence of his having been known under the epithet of 'Gaṇeśa' at least as early as the beginning of our era, if the peculiar characters on a Huviṣka coin in the India Museum of Calcutta are, as Vincent Smith believed, old Brāhmī for 'Gaṇeśa'.[2] The image on the coin, however, is that of Śiva and the epithet may possibly refer to him; but it may also illustrate Przyluski's theory that Śiva and Gaṇeśa were originally one and the same deity. The name 'Gaṇapati' is found as early as the middle of the fourth century, in a Gupta inscription on the Allahabad Pillar,[3] where the king Samudragupta mentions, among the kings that he has 'exterminated', the king Gaṇapati Nāga. This is the earliest instance of a king being called 'Gaṇapati' and does not occur again until after the tenth century. As this name was particularly associated with Gaṇeśa,[4] may it therefore be inferred that the god Gaṇapati was known as early as the fourth century? There is sculptural evidence of his popularity from the fifth century onwards, although no inscription has been found referring either to Gaṇeśa or to Gaṇapati as a god until after the Gupta period.

It was possibly because of his early popularity as 'Remover of Obstacles' that he was attached to different groups of deities such as the Navagrahas (the Nine Planets) and the Saptamātṛkās (the Seven Divine Mothers), whose origins are as ancient as they are obscure. The Navagrahas were believed to direct the destinies of men, and in order not to offend any of the group by the special worship of one of the *grahas*, they were appealed to *as a group*; but before addressing their supplications to the Navagrahas the worshippers considered it propitious to implore the 'Remover of Obstacles', Vighnāntaka, to intervene in their favour. It is probably for this reason that Gaṇeśa figured in the group; and that, as he was to be addressed first before the others, he was represented standing at the extreme right of the Planets, where he was figured of *equal* size with them. In all the Navagraha slabs yet discovered they are imaged standing in a row.[5]

At this same period Gaṇeśa, when in attendance on Śiva and Pārvatī, especially in the sculptures of the rock-cut temples, was always represented much *smaller* than his parents, in fact, like the other accessory minor deities in their suite. It therefore seems hardly probable that in this case prayers were addressed to him distinct from those intended for Śiva and Pārvatī. On the other hand, his presence in the group of Saptamātṛkās, where he is always represented of *equal* size with the goddesses, seems to indicate that his role was the same as with the Navagrahas, for the Seven Divine Mothers were also adored as a group.

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[1] v. *S.I.I.*, Sastri, p. 168, note iii, and *Antiquities of Mayūrabhanja*, by Nagendra Natha Vasu.

[2] From the plate given in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, this reading hardly seems possible. Part I, 1897, p. 3, pl. I, 6.

[3] *Gupta Inscriptions*, ed. by J. F. Fleet, p. 6.

[4] p. 3.

[5] 'Two Saura Images', R. Datta, *The I.H.Q.*, vol. ix, no. i, March 1933, pl. opp. p. 204.

According to the *Suprabhedāgama*, Gaṇeśa should be standing when in the company of the Saptamātṛkās; but in reality he is always seated, as are also the demon goddesses, and is placed at their extreme left. As a rule, his right knee is lifted, and the left is either pendent or bent before him on the *āsana*. His head may be crowned with the *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* as at Ellora, or he may wear the head-dress of Śiva, the *jaṭā-mukuṭa*, as at Belur. He is four-armed, holding almost always the axe and bowl; but the other symbols are not often easily identified. Underneath the *āsanas* of the goddesses are niches in which are the *vāhanas* of the gods of whom they are the *śaktis*, while in the niche underneath the seat of Gaṇeśa may be a rat or a bowl of cakes.

The cult of the Saptamātṛkās[1] is one of the most ancient in India. The seven Devīs were believed to be the feminine counterparts of the Seven Great Brahman Gods, and their origin is explained in puranic myth as follows: Śiva, in a great battle with the chief of the *asuras*, Andhāsura, found that from every drop of blood falling to earth from the slain *asuras* sprang another *asura*; and fearing to be overcome by them, he created out of the flame that issued from his mouth in battle a *śakti*, Yogeśvarī by name. The other seven Brahman Gods did likewise, and the seven *śaktis* thus brought into existence, led by Yogeśvarī, caught each drop of blood as it fell and thus was the chief of the *asuras* overcome.

The goddesses were given the names corresponding with the epithets of the Seven Great Brahman Gods of whom they were the counterparts; and they not only carried their symbols, but, as seen above, were given the same mounts. They were looked upon as the personifications of the seven bad mental qualities: Brahmāṇī, pride; Māheśvarī, anger; Kaumārī, illusion; Vaiṣṇavī, covetousness; Vārāhī, envy; Indrāṇī, fault-finding; Cāmuṇḍā, tale-bearing; and the leader of the Saptamātṛkās, Yogeśvarī, *Kāma* or desire.

Gaṇeśa was placed next to the last goddess at the left, Cāmuṇḍā, who was believed to partake of the nature of Pārvatī. In certain villages, especially in south India, she was to be found in the centre instead of at the left end of the group, and by this change it was indicated that supplications were to be addressed to the Saptamātṛkās for increasing the population of the village.

In the *Harivaṃśa* there are prayers invoking the Saptamātṛkās who are implored to protect little children as if they were 'their real mothers'.[2] It is perhaps for this reason that the seven *śaktis* were called the 'Divine Mothers', and that in most of the Saptamātṛkā groups they were imaged with a child beside them or else represented seated on the lap.

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[1] v. Pl. 2 (*c*). v. *Indian Antiquary*, Sept. 1906, p. 253. Shamasastry writes: 'In ancient India, the Mother of the World was called *mātṛ*, and the symbol which stood for her was called *mātṛkā*.'

[2] Kindly translated for the author by Dr. J. Filliozat.

In the *Īśāna-Śivagurudevapaddhati*,[1] Gaṇeśa, under the name of Vighnanāyaka, is invoked to protect little children from the demon-goddesses by removing all obstacles to a successful propitiation of the Saptamātṛkās. They were, however, not always looked upon as malignant deities but rather as the 'productive or nourishing powers of nature'. In the *Mahābhārata* they are referred to as the mothers of Skanda (Kārttikeya), but he is never figured accompanying them like his brother, Gaṇeśa.

According to directions in the *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra*,[2] Gaṇeśa was the first deity to be worshipped in ceremonies of initiation and consecration of tanks, wells, and images of deities; and was to be meditated upon according to the following *dhyāna*, as 'being vermilion of colour, as having three eyes, a large belly, as holding in his lotus-hands the conch-shell, noose, elephant goad, and as making the sign of blessing. On his forehead shines the young moon.[3] He has the head of the King of Elephants. . . .'

After the worshipper has thus invoked Gaṇeśa, he is to offer the *pancatattva* or the five elements,[4] wine, meat, fish, parched food, and woman, to the Elephant-faced god who is surrounded by eleven manifestations of himself.[5] The Divine Mothers are then to be worshipped, and it is interesting to note here that in the list, in place of the goddess Indrāṇī, is the goddess Aparājitā, whom we shall meet again in connexion with Gaṇeśa but under quite different circumstances.[6] Before the real ceremony begins, as we have said above, Gaṇeśa is invited to depart, by a *mantra* of dismissal, after which the Divine Mothers are again worshipped as well as the Navagrahas and other deities.

The Aṣṭasiddhis or the Eight Goddesses believed to preside over Success and Achievement were looked upon as the *Śaktis* of Gaṇeśa.[7] They are, probably, the same as the Saptamātṛkās with Yogeśvarī added; but the author knows of no Aṣṭamātṛkā slab in India.[8] As will be seen below,[9] Gaṇeśa had five aspects when holding his *śakti* who may possibly symbolize this group of Eight Goddesses.

The Saptamātṛkās accompanied by Gaṇeśa were worshipped in Śiva shrines; but in south India temples were built for the exclusive worship of the group. Those dedicated to Śiva were placed facing the east with Nandi, the bull, at the entrance, facing west. Images of Gaṇeśa were always put on the south side of the outer wall of the *liṅga* shrines, and the few temples dedicated to him were built facing south while the rat was imaged at the entrance looking to the north. Statues of Gaṇeśa, however, were more often found in the open,[10] either at approaches to Śiva temples, along the high roads, at the crossing of the ways, or under trees, in which case they were often accompanied by Nāga slabs.

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[1] Kindly translated for the author by Dr. J. Filliozat.

[2] Translated Avalon, p. 250.

[3] v. p. 10.

[4] Called the five 'M's': madya (wine), māṁsa (meat), matsya (fish), mudrā (parched cereal but the term was usually employed for a ritual gesture of the hand), maithuna (coition).

[5] Gaṇa-nāyaka, Gaṇa-nātha, Gaṇa-krīḍa, Eka-danta, Rakta-tuṇḍa, Lambodara, Gajānana, Mahodara, Vikaṭa, Dhūmrābha, Vighna-nāśana.

[6] v. p. 43.

[7] *S.I.I.*, Sastri, p. 173.

[8] At Kirtipur in Nepal there is a shrine dedicated to Gaṇeśa where the eight *devīs* are represented. v. *Nipal*, Oldfield, vol. i, p. 130.

[9] v. p. 20.

[10] v. Pl. 23 (*a*).

In the *Mudgala-purāṇa* he is given thirty-two different names, while in the *Śāradātilaka* there are fifty-one *dhāraṇīs* where he is invoked under different aspects; but of these many forms there were always two outstanding features: the face of an elephant and a fat, thick-set, *yakṣa*-shaped body.

The question is still unsolved as to how this type sprang into existence, affirming itself without sensible change from the fifth century to the present day. According to Krishna Deb, he owes the lower part of his body to the *yakṣa* cult; but, as we have seen above, he was apparently never worshipped as a *yakṣa*, for none of his names are to be found on *yakṣa* lists.

In his ancient form of Gaṇapati-Vināyaka we do not know whether he was possessed of an elephant-head or not. If, instead of the *gaṇas*, Gaṇeśa had been appointed leader of the *pāriṣadas*, a group of animal-headed inferior deities in the suite of Śiva, his creation with the face of an elephant, 'King of Beasts', would have found its explanation. There was also a group of inferior deities in the suite of Śiva who had another characteristic of Gaṇeśa, being 'pot-bellied'; but they were in attendance on Skanda, his brother, according to puranic myths. It seems, therefore, more likely that Gaṇeśa is to be looked upon as a derivative rather than as an original deity. In that case, was he derived from the *Bhairava* form of Śiva? In the *Viṣṇudharmottara*,[1] Śiva, in his aspect of Bhairava, is described as having a 'flabby belly' (other texts give 'pot-belly') and round, yellow (or red) eyes, side-tusks, and wide nostrils.[2] He has for garment the skin of an elephant. In the *Vaṭuka-Bhairavakalpa* he is described as *red* in colour and as having a serpent 'tied around his waist'. Most of these details are characteristics of Gaṇeśa, and the elephant skin with the head and its trunk hung over the shoulder of Śiva as Bhairava might easily have suggested the definite form of Gaṇeśa. As a matter of fact, some of his images, especially in bronze, if studied closely, give the impression of a masked head, which is still more apparent in paintings where his face is red and his neck and ears are pink.[3] It is of interest to note here that one of his names is 'Dvi-dehaka' or 'two-bodied'.

When his images or the *svayambhū-mūrtis*[4] are daubed with paint, the popular colour is red; but in paintings he may be either red or yellow, according to the sect, and is to be worshipped with offerings of red or yellow flowers. He may also have the face red and the body yellow; and there are esoteric forms such as Lakṣmī-Gaṇapati and Bhuvaneśa-Gaṇapati, where he is white. In paintings, he sometimes carries a red banner on which is figured his mount, the rat, if not represented beside him or under his feet, in which case he was called Ākhu-ratha, or 'He who rides on a rat'. He was seldom imaged, however, seated on the rat;[5] but in his form of Heramba, he may be seated on a lion.[6]

In the *dhyānas*, Gaṇeśa is usually invoked as having one head, which, following the Tantras, should be one-fifth of the total length of the body; but there are forms with two, three, four, or five heads. In India a two-headed image called Gaṇeśa-Jayanti was popular locally and is still worshipped in Bombay at his festival once a year. Sir William Jones draws a close comparison between Gaṇeśa-Jayanti and Janus, the two-headed god of the Romans whose characteristics strangely resembled those of Gaṇeśa—in fact, so closely that he refers to the latter as the 'Janus of India'. Gaṇeśa-Jayanti was represented with the head of an elephant at the right and a *human* head, at the left.[1] He was possessed of four arms holding the usual symbols and was figured seated in Indian fashion with the rat in attendance.

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[1] *E. of H.I.*, Rao, vol. ii, part i, p. 177.

[2] v. p. 25 (Amarāvatī railings).

[3] v. Pl. 11.

[4] Shapeless or almost shapeless stones or rocks.

[5] v. Pl. 13 (*c*).

[6] *S.I.I.*, Sastri, v. Fig. 112.

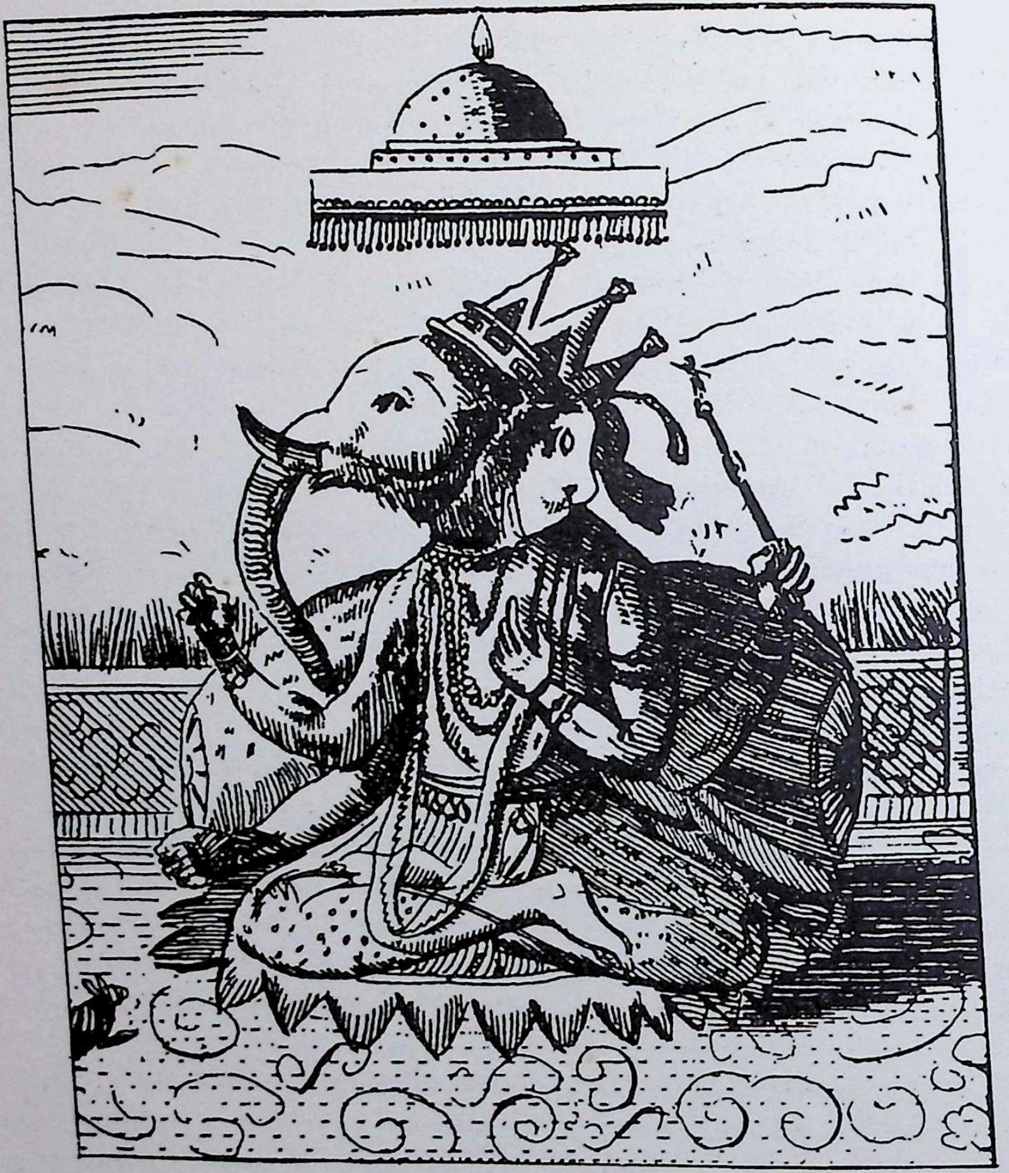

FIG. 1. Gaṇeśa-Jayanti.

Gaṇeśa with three heads was never represented in India, nor was he known to the Hindus with four heads; but in Japan there existed a form with three heads called

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[1] v. Fig. 1, and *Asiatic Researches*, vol. i; *J.A.S. of B.*, 1806, p. 226.

Vināyaka, King of Elephants,[1] while in Indo-China, in a private collection, is a small bronze image with four heads.[2]

In Nepal the four-headed Gaṇeśa was not unknown, for in a descriptive list of the different Nepalese aspects of Gaṇeśa[3] there is reference to a 'four-headed Gaṇeśa'; but without seeing the statue itself, it is difficult to judge whether or not it is a five-headed Heramba with the top head missing. In the image from Indo-China, however, there can be no question of its being a partially decapitated Heramba. The five-headed form of Gaṇeśa was most popular in Nepal and had certain followers in India; but Heramba is practically never found outside of these two countries. Certain accounts state that Gaṇeśa was born with five heads,[4] one pointing to each of the four cardinal points with the fifth, on top; and this arrangement of the five heads was usually adopted for the Heramba form of Gaṇeśa. There are examples, however, where, as on a *stela* found in the Munshiganj district, Dacca, the five heads are on the same tier, that is, with two on either side of the central head which is much larger than the other four; but this is a most unusual arrangement.[5]

When invoked, Gaṇeśa was to be conceived as possessing only one tusk which should be on the right side. There are, however, images of the Ekadanta with the tusk on the left side[6] as well as possessing both tusks.[7] He may even be represented having three tusks, which, however, is most unusual.[8]

The absence of one of the tusks is variously accounted for in puranic myths; but the most popular legend gives that it was broken off in an encounter with Śiva and runs as follows: When Pārvatī created Gaṇeśa without participation of Śiva,[9] he was thus unknown to the Lord of the Trident who found him guarding the door of the private apartments of the goddess. Śiva challenged him and in the terrific fight that ensued, one of Gaṇeśa's tusks was broken off by Śiva with his axe. There is a legend, however, which has few followers, claiming that the head of the elephant, cut off by Viṣṇu and placed on the headless body of Gaṇeśa, had primarily only one tusk. Certain accounts relate that Gaṇeśa used his broken tusk as stylus when acting as amanuensis to the poet Vyāsa.

A south Indian legend[10] gives another version of the absence of one of the tusks and accounts for the presence of the rat which usually accompanies Gaṇeśa: there was once a giant-demon with the face of an elephant who was unconquerable either by god or by man. Gaṇeśa, being only a demi-god, was thus able to fight with him with some possibility of success. At the first encounter the giant-demon, Gajamukhāsura by name, broke off Gaṇeśa's right tusk; but Gaṇeśa caught his broken tusk and hurled it at the giant-demon, who instantly turned into a rat, whereupon Gaṇeśa took him into his service as his *vāhana*. One of his ancient names is Muṣka-vāhana or 'He whose mount is a rat'. According to Gupte[11] the sanskrit word *muṣka* also stands for

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[1] v. p. 80.

[2] v. Pl. 27 (*c*).

[3] Kindness of His Holiness Rajguru Hemraj Sarmaṇ of Nepal.

[4] v. p. 7.

[5] v. Pl. 4 (*b*).

[6] v. Pl. 5 (*b*).

[7] v. Pl. 1 (*b*).

[8] v. Pl. 14 (*d*).

[9] v. p. 6.

[10] *A.S. de l'I.*, Jouveau-Dubreuil, t. II, p. 44.

[11] 'Harvest Festivals of G. and G.', *Indian Antiquary*, vol. xxxv, Nov. 1906.

'thief', and he explains that the epithet 'Muṣka-vāhana' really means: The Lord of the Harvest overcoming the pestilence of the field mouse, thief and destroyer of the crops. The rat has also been variously explained as symbolizing the night or as being a priapic animal; but it seems more probable that, like the other Hindu deities, Gaṇeśa was allotted a *vāhana* which may have been suggested by the above myth or a similar one. At any rate, the rat is found in company with Gaṇeśa at a very early period in north India, but was not introduced into south India before the twelfth century.[1]

As a rule, the trunk was represented hanging straight and only turning to the left or to the right toward the end; but there are examples where the trunk turns, almost at once, to the left and then hangs straight[2] or is raised to the level of the shoulder.[3] In south India, when it turns to the left, Gaṇeśa is called Idamburi. In the few examples where it turns to the right, he is called in Tamil Valamburi. When turned to the left, the trunk, as a rule, is about to lift cakes (*batasa*) from a bowl in Gaṇeśa's left hand, but practically never when turning to the right. The end of the trunk may be coiled and seemingly balancing a ball-shaped cake called a *modaka*,[4] or is it a *jambu* (wood-apple)?

As a rule, the images of Gaṇeśa have two eyes, but on Tantric statues and when invoked in Tantric *dhyānas* he has a third eye. The two normal eyes, in India, are represented small, round, staring, and low in relief, while the third eye, set obliquely in the forehead, is, on the contrary, long and narrow, flame-shaped, and high in relief. On the forehead may be the *tilak* of Śiva, the crescent moon,[5] in which case he is called Bhālacandra, a form especially worshipped by the esoteric sects. According to legend, the moon, Candra, was cursed by a god and lost its brightness, whereupon Gaṇeśa picked it up and placed it on his forehead. In place of the moon-*tilak*, there may be three horizontal lines[6] painted white on his forehead indicating an image worshipped by a Śaiva sect; but he is popularly adored without *tilak* or the third eye.

The head, as a rule, resembles closely that of an elephant; but in Kashmir, and especially in Nepal, it is represented long, narrow, and flat, while farther east, especially in Java, the face may take on a more human aspect with the eyes close together and the trunk seemingly a prolongation of the nose.[7] The ears are large and broad as a rule, and each may be ornamented with a conch-shell, as at Ballaur in the ancient temple of Harihara[8] as well as at Deopara, in the Rajshahi District. We shall also see it on the two attendant deities on either side of Gaṇeśa in the sculptures in the Tripuri State referred to below.[9] The presence of the conch-shells undoubtedly conveyed to the adept some meaning which we are at a loss to explain; but it is safe to say that although the conch-shell is an attribute of Viṣṇu, in this case it has no reference to him. It is interesting to note here that in Indo-China, there is an ancient statue of Gaṇeśa holding the conch-shell.[10]

[1] *A.S. de l'I.*, Jouveau-Dubreuil, t. II, p. 46.

[2] v. Pl. 2 (*a*).

[3] v. Pl. 14 (*b*).

[4] v. Pl. 4 (*b*).

[5] v. Fig. 2.

[6] v. Pl. 20 (*a*) and (*b*).

[7] v. Pl. 32 (*d*).

[8] *Indian Art and Letters*, vol. vii, no. ii, Pl. IV; *Antiquities of Basohli and Ramnagar*, by R. Chandra Kak.

[9] v. p. 30.

[10] v. Pl. 25 (*c*).

Gaṇeśa may wear the head-dress of Śiva, the *jaṭā-mukuṭa*, a complicated arrangement of braided hair and jewels forming a high chignon;[1] but his usual head-dress is a terraced-crown called *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*,[2] which in its earliest conception was bowl-shaped but in time became extremely ornate, losing its original character. He is rarely represented without a head-dress except in his most ancient images, where he may, however, wear a simple jewelled band encircling his head, as on the Bhumāra statue.[3] The head-dress is found on images as early as the sixth century.

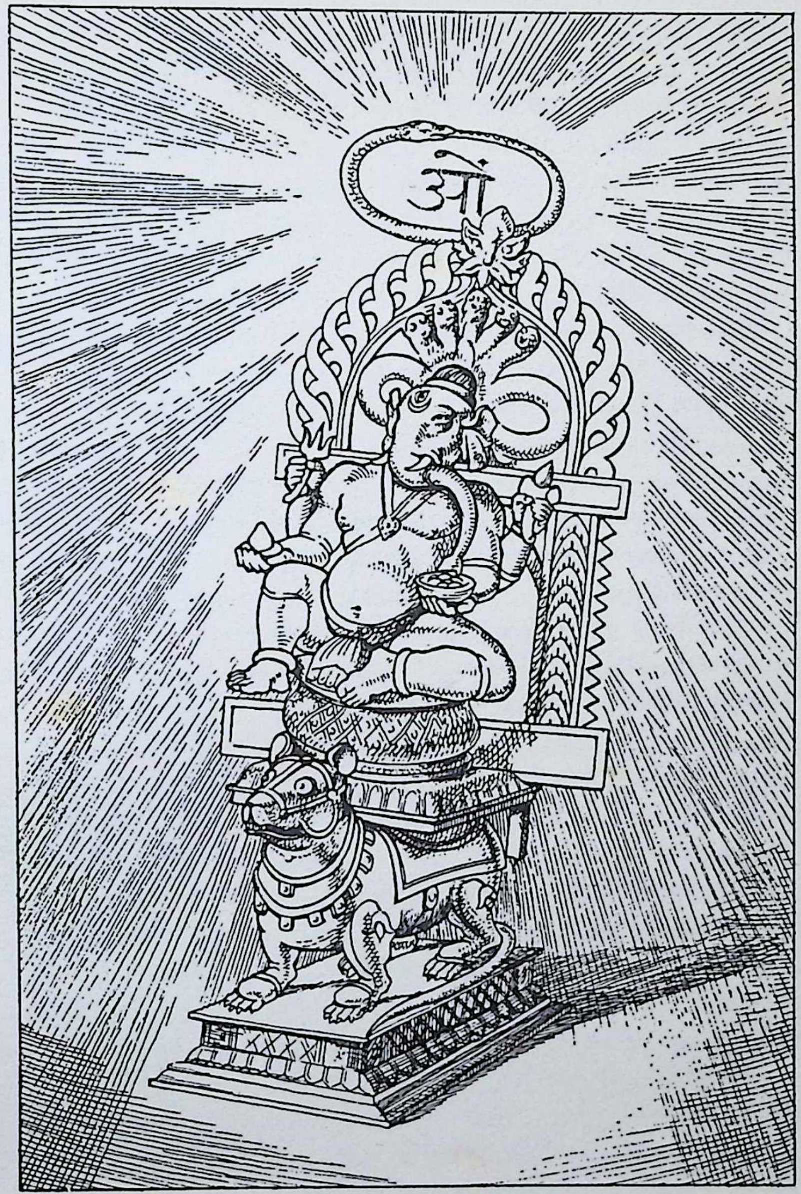

FIG. 2. Form of Gaṇapati worshipped by the esoteric sects.

Gaṇeśa, when invoked, should be conceived with two or four arms, but his complicated Tantric representations may have ten or more. The symbols that he may carry and which are held by no other deity are: the broken tusk, a citron, wood-apple (*jambu*), a radish, a stylus, a bowl of cakes, and a *modaka*; but he may have other attributes such as the axe, a lasso, a book, a sword, a *kalaśa*, a snake, &c.[1] In his Tantric forms with many arms, he holds the usual Tantric symbols. The broken tusk and the axe have been accounted for above, in puranic myths. The citron or the *jambu* stands for the *Gaṇapati-liṅga*. The radish, almost unknown in India, is a favourite attribute in Nepal and in Tibet as well as in Japan. As it is never carried by Gaṇeśa at the same time as the broken tusk, which is practically unknown in those three countries, it seems possible that the radish was primarily a misinterpretation of a badly executed broken tusk. There is a saying in Bengal that Gaṇeśa is the god with 'ears like a fan and teeth like a radish';[2] but outside of Japan, the author knows of no legend explaining its presence in his hand.

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[1] v. Pl. 16 (*d*).

[2] v. Pl. 5 (*a*) and (*b*).

[3] v. Pl. 3 (*a*).

He may also carry the water-vessel (*kalaśa*) either in one of his hands or it may be held in his trunk, in which latter case it is more likely a wine jar,[3] for in a *dhyāna* in the *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra* it is said: 'His great trunk is adorned with the jar of wine which it holds'. The stylus and the book, as we have seen above, may be found in paintings in India, while in Indo-China there are several ancient statues depicting him as a scribe.[4] The bowl of cakes may be said to be not only his most ancient but his most characteristic attribute. It is almost always held in his left hand, and the trunk is often represented lifting one of the small cakes called *batasa* from the bowl. If figured with his *śakti*, she may hold the bowl. The *modaka* is also a cake, ball-shaped but larger than the *batasa*, and is usually represented by itself. It may either be held in the coil of the trunk[5] or be placed before him on the *āsana*;[6] but with the exception of Bāla-Gaṇapati[7] and Taruṇa-Gaṇapati, none of his forms carry it in the hands. It is sometimes held in the mouth of the rat.[8] Certain sects looked upon the *modaka* as symbolizing Mahā-Buddhi or Supreme Wisdom; but in the esoteric doctrine practised by the Gāṇapatyas, it was conceived as representing the germ of life.[9] Rao makes reference to this mystic interpretation when he explains that in the esoteric doctrine the round belly of Gaṇeśa, Lord of the Universe, was imbued with mystic significance, that is, that it was to be conceived as symbolizing a vast expanse of space, capacious enough to hold the thousands of *modakas* which stood for all the human germs in the universe.[10]

In India, three of the esoteric forms of Gaṇeśa[11] carry the pomegranate, which has at all times, according to Goblet d'Alviella, been considered an emblem of fertility, of abundance of life;[12] and it is of interest to note here that in the Nepalese and Tibetan paintings of Gaṇeśa,[1] the *modaka* is replaced by the *cintāmaṇi*, which in Mahāyāna Buddhism is the magic jewel interpreted, in the esoteric doctrine, as symbolizing the germ of life. In India, however, Gaṇeśa practically never holds the magic jewel; but in the India Museum in London there is a small bronze image where, in his right hand, he balances a *modaka* distinctly in the form of a *cintāmaṇi*, while his left arm is around the waist of the *śakti*. Gaṇeśa, nevertheless, is addressed in the *Ārya-Gaṇapati-stotra*[2] as 'Lord of Jewels, with a body of Jewels, Jewelled Source of Jewels, who protects the Jewels of the Doctrine. O, Lord, with the trunk of an elephant, homage!'; and in the *Gaṇeśa-purāṇa* there is a legend which describes Gaṇeśa as being symbolized by a *cintāmaṇi*.[3] A great Asura, Tripurāsura by name, worshipped Gaṇeśa with the two *mantras*, '*Śrī Gaṇeśa namaḥ*' and '*Oṁ*', while standing on his great toe thousands of years in mystic contemplation of the Elephant-faced god. Gaṇeśa, deeply impressed by such austerity, appeared to him, whereupon Tripurāsura asked as reward for his victory over his senses and passions that he be able to conquer the Three Worlds. As soon as Gaṇeśa had granted his request, he proceeded to conquer Brahmā and to reduce Viṣṇu to submission; but Śiva, when asked to descend from Mount Kailāsa, demurred. The three great gods then appealed to Gaṇeśa to save them from utter destruction. Gaṇeśa, promising to do so, disguised himself as a Brahman ascetic and, appearing to Tripurāsura, proposed building for him a great city on Mount Kailāsa, but insisted that, at the entrance to Kailāsa, be erected a *cintāmaṇi* dedicated to Gaṇeśa. This being done, Śiva refused to abandon Kailāsa and a great battle ensued; but as the Lord of the Trident put his faith in Gaṇeśa and worshipped him, Tripurāsura lost the Three Worlds and disappeared into the Divine Essence, as had been promised him by the Supreme Gaṇeśa.

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[1] When in dancing attitude, he may hold the cobra near the head, the tail trailing on the ground. This form is found in central and south India.

[2] Letter of Mr. Prabodh Candra Bagchi.

[3] v. Pl. 7 (*b*).

[4] v. Pl. 26.

[5] v. Pl. 14 (*c*).

[6] v. Pl. 14 (*b*).

[7] v. Pl. 15 (*c*).

[8] v. Pl. 20 (*a*).

[9] The *modaka* may in reality represent the wood-apple (*jambu*), much venerated, especially in northern India.

[10] *E. of H.I.*, Rao, vol. i, part i, p. 61.

[11] *Lakṣmī*-Gaṇapati, *Mahā*-Gaṇapati, *Ucchiṣṭa*-Gaṇapati.

[12] *La Migration des Symboles*, p. 184.

Gaṇeśa was usually represented seated, but in his most ancient images he was more often figured standing. If sitting, he may have the pose called *mahārājalīlā* or 'royal ease', that is, with one of the knees lifted while the other is bent before him on the *āsana*; or he may be seated with crossed legs or with one leg pendant. In Java, both of the legs are bent before him with the soles of the feet touching; but the feet are neither human nor do they resemble absolutely those of an elephant.[4] If he is standing, he is either straight (sama-bhaṅga) or may have two bends (dvi-bhaṅga), three bends (tri-bhaṅga), or be in dancing attitude.[5] He was represented either without ornaments or as wearing many jewels, which in certain forms were replaced by snakes or, as in Java, by skulls. Except when figured as a child, he was usually imaged 'pot-bellied' (Lambodara) and bare to the waist, with a girdle below the abdomen holding the garment that covered his hips and that varied according to the country in which the image was conceived. In Nepal, it was often a stiff-pleated skirt hanging to below the knees; in Chinese Turkestan, tight-fitting trousers called *paijāmas*; at Tun-huang, full, many-folded trousers; in Indo-China, the *sampot*; but in India, he was either nude or wearing a *dhotī*, with sometimes a tiger skin covering his hips.

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[1] v. Pl. 20 (*a*).

[2] *Tandjur*, 83, 94ᵛ. Kindly translated by Mr. Sylvain Lévi.

[3] 'Analysis of the Gaṇeśa-purāṇa', the Rev. Dr. Stevenson, *J.R.A.S.*, vol. viii, 1845, p. 319.

[4] v. Pl. 30.

[5] v. Pl. 22 (*a*).

Across his body, from under the right arm to across the left shoulder, was either the Brahmanical thread or a serpent in its place; and around the belly was often tied a second girdle of a snake,[1] the presence of which is accounted for in the following puranic legend: Gaṇeśa, receiving from his worshippers an offering of innumerable ball-shaped cakes (*modaka*), proceeded to eat them all and thus his belly became abnormally distended. He then mounted on his *vāhana*, the rat,[2] and started off to return to his dwelling place, when the rat, seeing a serpent cross its path, tripped with fright, sending Gaṇeśa rolling to the ground. In falling off, his dilated abdomen burst, and all the innumerable *modakas* that he had eaten fell out. He proceeded to gather them and replace them in his capacious belly; and after killing the serpent, he tied it around his waist to keep them from falling out again. The Moon, surrounded by his twenty-seven starry consorts, had watched the above proceeding with much mirth and finally burst into uproarious laughter, which so infuriated Gaṇeśa that he pulled out one of his tusks and threw it at the Moon. Darkness then covered the earth, and the gods in great distress begged the 'Remover of Obstacles' to withdraw his tusk from the repentant Moon. This he consented to do, but in order to punish the Moon, he willed that for ever after its brilliance, in every month, should wax and wane.

With the growing influence of the Tantras and the popularity of Śaktism, Gaṇeśa was imaged, as were the other gods, in company with his female counterpart whom he was represented holding with his left arm, either beside him or on his left hip. The *devī*, as a rule, had her right arm around his neck, while the left, as we have said above, often held the bowl of *batasas*.

Śaktism was particularly practised by a powerful sect who adopted Gaṇeśa as their special deity and established his worship to the exclusion of practically every other Hindu god, even of his parents, Śiva and Pārvatī. Gaṇeśa under the name of Gaṇapati thus became an important deity toward the tenth century when the Gāṇapatya sect set up the cult of five Śakti-Gaṇapatis called: Ucchiṣṭa-Gaṇapati, four-armed, red in colour; Mahā-Gaṇapati, ten-armed, red; Ūrddhva-Gaṇapati, six-armed, yellow; Piṅgala-Gaṇapati, six-armed;[3] Lakṣmī-Gaṇapati, four- or eight-armed, white, while the *śakti* is yellow and carries a lotus.[4]

In time, the Gāṇapatya divided into six separate sects, and while they were all six of accord in looking upon Gaṇeśa as the First Great Cause 'through whose *māyā* Śiva and the other gods were created', he was nevertheless worshipped by each sect under a different name, in a somewhat different form, and differently worded *mantras* were used for their respective mystic rites of initiation. They set up two ways of worshipping Gaṇapati which varied only in detail, according to the sect:

1. *By mystical contemplation.*

Those of the Gāṇapatya who worshipped Gaṇeśa under the aspect of Mahā-Gaṇapati were to meditate upon his image, red of colour with ten arms, holding among other symbols a pomegranate[1] and embracing his *śakti* or female energy. He was to be conceived as Creator of all the gods, the Supreme Spirit (*paramātma*).

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[1] v. p. 13. Bhairava form of Śiva.

[2] *E. of H.I.*, Rao, vol. i, part i, p. 51.

[3] *Piṅgala* means 'yellow'.

[4] Another text gives: Mahā-Gaṇapati, Haridrā-Gaṇapati, Ucchiṣṭa-Gaṇapati, Navanīta-Gaṇapati, Svarṇa-Gaṇapati, Santāna-Gaṇapati.

The sect which adored the Elephant-faced One under the form of Haridrā-Gaṇapati meditated upon him as having four arms, as being yellow of colour, and possessed of a third eye. He was to be conceived as Leader of all the gods, and each devotee was branded on both arms with his elephant face having *only one tusk*.

Another meditative sect of the Gāṇapatya adored him as Ucchiṣṭa-Gaṇapati, but unlike the above exclusive sects, all castes were admitted to his worship. The devotees meditated on his form with four arms, holding a pomegranate in one of his hands while embracing his *śakti*. He was to be conceived while practising most licentious rites and ceremonies.

2. *By devotional practices without meditation.*

The devotee, after crowning Gaṇeśa with flowers, was to make offerings of fruit and of red or yellow flowers, according to the sect.

The Gāṇapatya were *liṅga* worshippers and the Gaṇapati *liṅga*[2] was considered second only to the Svayambhū, which was enshrined in the innermost sanctuary of a temple and never gazed upon by its worshippers. The Gaṇapati *liṅga*, being less sacred, was shown to the members of the Gāṇapatya sect. It was in form somewhat in the shape of a citron,[3] a cucumber, or a wood apple[4] and its worship was believed to have been set up by the *gaṇas* at a very early date.[5]

At the annual fête of the Gāṇapatya, Gaṇeśa was sometimes represented with his father, Śiva, in attendance on him; but outside of the six esoteric sects, the exclusive worship of Gaṇeśa was not practised.

In the *Samayācāra-tantra*[6] are mentioned the six *āmnāyas* or faces of Śiva: four facing the cardinal points, one on top and the sixth, underneath and hidden, and from whose mouth were spoken the *sādhanas* and *siddhimantras*. From the face looking toward the west, called Kāma or love, were revealed the gods Krișṇa, Gaṇeśa, Yama and Sūrya, Candra and other planets. The *Tantra-śāstra* refers to the six minds of the six heads of Śiva; but in the *Varāha-purāṇa* there is only question of *one face*, from the forehead of which issued, as we have said above, a great brilliance in which Gaṇeśa was 'revealed', that is, 'mind-born'.

Thus certain esoteric sects came to look upon Gaṇeśa as a material manifestation of the *manas* of Śiva, manifestation which, as seen above in the *Gāṇapatya Hymn* was conceived to be made up of earth, water, fire, air, and ether. In India, the five elements were symbolized by the elemental *stūpa* which was composed of a rectangle (earth), circle (water), triangle (fire), crescent (air), and a flame-shaped symbol rising from the centre of the crescent (ether).[7] It is a curious fact that the seated esoteric form of Gaṇeśa vaguely suggests an elemental *stūpa* if we conceive of the rectangle as being formed by the thick, elephant-shaped legs bent beneath the god;

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[1] v. p. 18.

[2] Phallic form.

[3] v. Pl. 14 (*b*).

[4] *jambu.*

[5] *E. of H.I.*, Rao, vol. ii, part i, p. 86.

[6] v. *Shakti and Shākta*, by Sir. J. Woodroffe, p. 75.

[7] v. p. 5, v. Fig. 3, p. 22.

the circle by the round belly; the triangle[1] by the tusks, mouth, and upper part of the trunk; the crescent and flame-shaped symbol by the crescent *tilaka* and flame-shaped third eye on the forehead of Gaṇapati as conceived by the Gāṇapatya.

Symbols representing the gods were worshipped, according to Shamasastry,[2] long before the adoration of idols; and circles, triangles, squares, or rectangles were used in 'assigning a pictorial form for victims of sorcery *or for deities*'. In the *Śivācāra-candrikā*, it is explained that: first, the rectangle represented the lower part of the body to the knees; second, the semicircle, the knees to the navel; third, the triangle, the navel to the neck; fourth, the 'black figure', the neck to the brows; fifth, the circle with a 'flag symbol', the brows to the top of the head called *brahmarandhra*. There are *dhyānas* in the *Śāradātilaka-tantra*[3] where Gaṇeśa is associated with triangles, rectangles, &c. Possibly the elemental *stūpa* was used in the hidden esoteric tenets of the Gāṇapatya to designate Gaṇapati in his form of 'Lord of the Universe'.

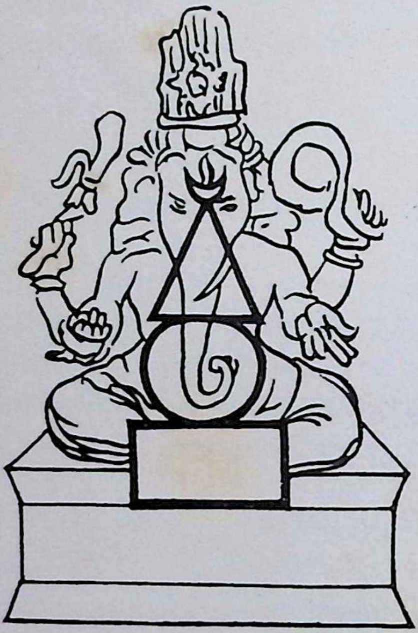

FIG. 3. Gaṇeśa, 'Lord of the Universe'.

Like Śiva, Gaṇeśa was popularly worshipped impersonated by a formless (or almost formless) stone called *svayambhū-mūrti*, that is, sprung into existence spontaneously, pervaded by the essence of the deity, and imbued with special divine qualities. In the case of Gaṇeśa, the *svayambhū-mūrti* was always painted red. It was never placed on a pedestal nor found in temples unless where a temple was built over it for protection. As a rule, the *svayambhū-mūrti* was set up in the open, under trees, along the high roads, and in the beds of rivers. The most celebrated *svayambhū-mūrtis* of Gaṇeśa are to be found in Kashmir, where there are three famous and most powerful formless stones which from ancient times have drawn pilgrims to their shrines. One, which is near the village of Gaṇeś-bal, is in the river Lidar near its right bank, and is still an important place of pilgrimage. The huge rock daubed with red paint is believed to have occult power because, in the fourteenth century, the king of Kashmir, Sikandar But-shikast and his suite, perished, attacked by an army of bees, because of his intention of destroying the *svayambhū-mūrti* of Gaṇeśa.[4]

Another rock in Kashmir which has been worshipped from most ancient times as a symbol of Gaṇeśa under the name of Bhīmasvāmin is at the foot of the hill Hari-Parbat near Srinagar. It is said that the rock once resembled the head of Gaṇeśa;

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[1] The triangle, symbol of fire, belongs to the third of the five canals of the senses, the 'breathing out through the mouth':

'Le canal de l'ouest est *apāna*, c'est la parole, c'est le feu.' *Chāndogya-Upanishad*, trans. by Senart, p. 38.

[2] 'Theory of the O. of the D. Alphabet', *The Ind. Antiquary*, Sept. 1906, p. 253.

[3] Kindly translated by Mr. Bhaṭṭasali.

[4] Kindness of Mr. A. Foucher.

but it is so covered with layers of red paint that there is now no resemblance to the head of an elephant. According to local legend,[1] when the pious king Pravarasena founded the city of Pravarapura, the god turned his head from west to east in order to behold the new city. Legend also recounts that Gaṇeśa turned his head back again at the iconoclasm of king Sikandar But-shikast.

The most remarkable of these *svayambhū-mūrtis* in Kashmir is the one on a cliff along the Kishen-gaṅga known as Gaṇeś-Ghati. Sir Aurel Stein writes:[2] 'On a face of grey lime rock, about fifty feet high, nature has formed a long projecting nose which curiously resembles the head of an elephant with the trunk hanging down. The rock is covered in this place with the orthodox daub of red paint. This shows plainly where pious tradition places the head of the elephant-faced god which has given its name to the hill.'

In the mythical land of Jambu-dvīpa there was a mountain in the shape of an elephant called Vinātaka, often confused with Vināyaka. The result was that in every Buddhist country where there was a hill or mountain which was vaguely in the form of the head of an elephant, the worship of Gaṇeśa was set up and a place of pilgrimage established. Thus, from an unimportant deity, Gaṇeśa, 'Remover of Obstacles', grew in popularity and was taken up not only by the Buddhist but by all the Hindu sects. Up to the tenth century, he was rarely worshipped alone and was combined with practically every important deity in the Hindu pantheon; but although he occupied a prominent place in Brahman mythology and was worshipped as one of the five Great Brahman Gods, there is no mention, even in late *purāṇas*, of his being invested with special divine power. Under the name of Vināyaka, Gaṇeśa was adored, however, by all those who embarked upon any enterprise; and as Vighneśvara, he was invoked at the beginning of every book to ensure literary success. His image was placed on the site of a future construction and a *pūjā* performed with offerings of flowers, to gain his benign guardianship. As popular legend gave him the reputation of robbing pious worshippers of the fruit of their devotions if not properly propitiated, he was always invoked before beginning the devotions. There was, however, one *mantra* according to the *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra*,[3] the sacred Brahmā-gāyatrī, which might be recited without first appealing to 'Gaṇeśa the Thief'.

In south India, especially, he is a popular household god and is familiarly adored as Piḷḷaiyar.[4] He is invoked the first of all the gods at the morning ablutions and again at noon and before sleeping at night; and is often worshipped in company with four other great deities: Viṣṇu, Śiva, Pārvatī, and Āditya, the Sun, symbol of Brahmā. In high-caste houses, there is usually a sacred receptacle containing a small altar for the five household gods.[5] If Śiva was chosen as the chief household god, he was placed in the centre, in his *liṅga* form, with Nandi the bull facing him. Gaṇeśa was seated either on the other side of the *liṅga* or in one of the corners, while before him was a pile of *modakas*, generally five in number, called *pañca-piṇḍa*. Sometimes, instead of being imaged, the Five Brahman gods are represented by five consecrated pebbles: Viṣṇu, a black pebble; Śiva, white quartz; Pārvatī, metallic stone; Āditya, crystal; and Gaṇeśa, a red stone.[1]

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[1] Kindness of Mr. A. Foucher.

[2] *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī: a Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir*, by Sir Aurel Stein, vol. ii, p. 311.

[3] Trans. by Avalon, p. 40, n. 12.

[4] v. p. 1.

[5] v. Pl. 15 (*a*).

If Gaṇeśa was chosen as the principal household god, he was placed in the centre of the altar with Viṣṇu in the right-hand corner of the prescribed square, but at the back, while Śiva was in the corresponding left-hand corner. At the right-hand corner, in front, was Pārvatī, while in the corresponding left-hand corner was Āditya.

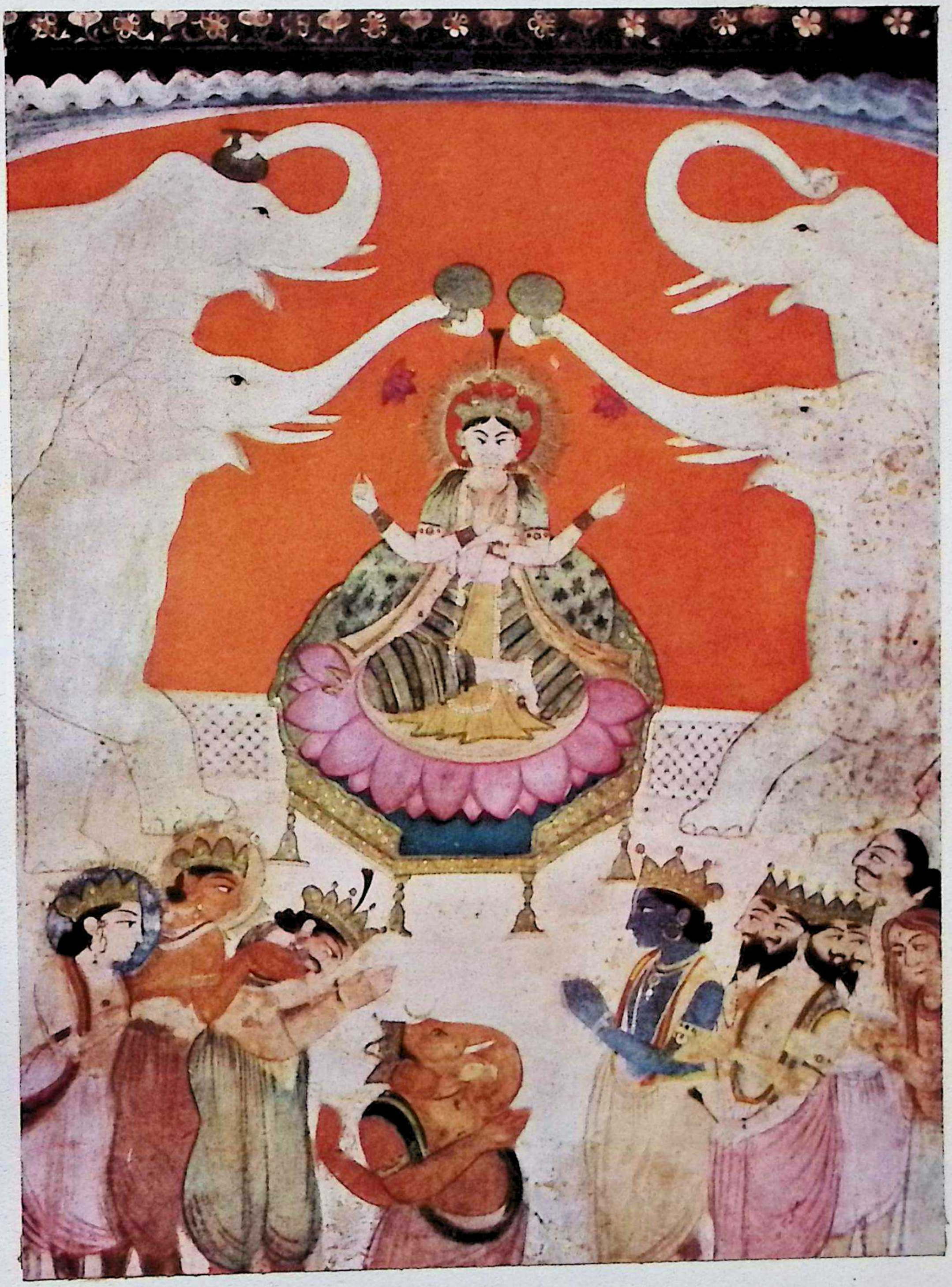
When invoking Gaṇeśa, the worshipper was to conceive of an island made of nine precious stones. . . . In that island are wish-fulfilling trees and creepers like *mandāra* and *pārijāta*... the horizon is illuminated by the rising sun and the moon. 'Conceive a *pārijāta* tree (one of the five trees of paradise) made of nine jewels. . . . Under the tree, inside the primordial lotus, is an *āsana* seated upon which Mahā-Gaṇapati should be invoked inside a triangle, within a hexagon. . . .'[2]

The prayer used in the worship of Gaṇapati as principal household deity is the following: 'I adore the Elephant-faced Gaṇeśa, the Incomprehensible with sharp tusks, three eyes and a capacious belly. . . . King of all Beings, the Eternal . . . blood red of hue, whose forehead is illuminated by the new moon,[3] son of Śiva, Remover of all Difficulties.'

[1] *S.I.I.*, Sastri, p. 36.

[2] *Sāradātilaka-tantra*. Kashmīrian work of the eleventh century, chap. xiii.

[3] 'That god upon whose glorious forehead the new moon is painted with the froth of the Gaṅgā.'



The *abhiṣeka* of Gaja-Lakṣmī

CHAPTER III

INDIA: GAṆEŚA IN HINDU SCULPTURES AND PAINTINGS

GAṆEŚA is not to be found in sculpture before the Gupta period, when his image appeared not only suddenly but in the classic form by which he may be identified from the fifth century up to the present day. It seems incredible that the remarkable Bhumāra sculptures of Gaṇeśa[1] should have been created independently, without the inspiration of transitional forms; and yet no images of an elephant-faced deity have been discovered which could be placed unquestionably earlier than the fifth century. The explanation may possibly be found if we apply the same theory to the ancient images of Gaṇeśa, as to certain archaeological ruins in India that are believed to have been reproduced from more ancient monuments which were constructed in impermanent material. In that case, the question would arise as to whether the original form of the elephant-faced deity was conceived in north or in south India.

Coomaraswamy as well as Jouveau-Dubreuil are inclined to look upon an image on one of the Amarāvatī railings,[2] said to be not later than the beginning of our era, as a transitional form of Gaṇeśa. The personage is crouching under the weight of a long, serpent-shaped garland,[3] upheld at intervals by other *gaṇas*. Only a part of the body is left, but enough remains to show that the *gaṇa* is short and of the usual *yakṣa* corpulence. The head is unquestionably that of an elephant: that is, the eyes, ears, and the lower lip; but as the image has neither trunk nor tusk, it is questionable whether it is really a prototype of Gaṇeśa. On the other hand, in Ceylon, near Mihintale, a *stūpa* has been recently excavated on which there is a frieze of *gaṇas* in the style of those of Amarāvatī, and one of the *gaṇas* has the face of an elephant, *complete with trunk and tusk.*[4] Paranavitane describes them as seemingly supporting the superstructures of the *vahalkadas* or 'frontispieces' which usually decorate the Sinhalese *stūpas*. The elephant-faced *gaṇa* is seated with attendant *gaṇas* on either side facing him; and from the fact that he has only one tusk, Paranavitane is of the opinion that the image may be a prototype of the classical Gaṇeśa. In that case it would be the most ancient representation of Gaṇeśa yet found, for this *stūpa*, called Kantaka Cetinga, is referred to in inscriptions of the first and second centuries. Even if, as he believes, the sculptures are of a somewhat later period, the image may be unquestionably ascribed to the first centuries of our era; but as it is the only one of its kind and is in a group of other *gaṇas*, it could hardly have struck the popular imagination deeply enough to inspire the forms of Gaṇeśa which appeared in India in the Gupta period. Thus, seemingly without transitional stage, the most ancient representations of Gaṇeśa are the *completed* type: two or four-armed, holding the axe, the broken tusk, a *modaka* (or is it a *jambu*?), or a bowl of cakes.

There were other elephant-headed super-beings of lesser rank but possibly of still greater antiquity which were known to both north and south India as well as to Indo-China and to Chinese Turkestan,[1] but they were as a rule never figured holding attributes, at least, never those indicated above.

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[1] v. p. 26 and v. Pl. 3.

[2] *Amarāvatī*, Burgess, pl. 30, no. 1.

[3] According to M. Jouveau-Dubreuil, a 'sack of rupees'.

[4] v. Pl. 22 (*c*). Kindness of Mr. S. Paranavitane.

Probably one of the earliest images of Gaṇeśa is a small terra-cotta bas-relief which was found at the ancient site of Akra, N.W.F.P., where pre-Gupta objects as early as the second century have been discovered.[2] The figure of Gaṇeśa, however, is certainly not earlier than the fifth century, and those found at Parkarhar are possibly still later. In both cases, the small burnt-clay images, which were probably ex-votos, represent Gaṇeśa in a slightly dancing attitude, holding a round object that may be a *modaka*.

An image of Gaṇeśa which was found in the Fatehgaṛh district and is believed to have come originally from Sankisa Mound may be the most ancient representation of the god in stone as yet discovered.[3] The slab, on which is carved the figure of Gaṇeśa in high relief, is of the spotted stone peculiar to Mathurā, and is not more than twenty inches in height. It is summarily carved and strangely proportioned. The bare head with huge ears is abnormally large, while the nude torso is too short for the length of the arms. The legs seem to end at the knees, giving the impression of a seated figure which, however, is not the case. The right arm is bent and grasps a pointed object which is probably the tusk. The left, also bent, holds the bowl of cakes. The trunk, unlike the Indian representations, where it hangs straight and only coils to the left to reach the bowl, turns almost at once to the left, and then hangs straight to the bowl. The author knows of only one other example of this unusual curve of the trunk in the image discovered at Tūol Phak Kin in Indo-China.[4]

A curious statue, which seems to be unique, was found at Bhumāra and is attributed to the fifth century.[5] In spite of the fact that the symbols are missing, it is undoubtedly an image of Gaṇeśa, for although the trunk is broken off at the end, it turns to the left and can easily be conceived as lifting a cake from a bowl that should be in the left hand, which is also missing. The unusual feature of the figure is a chain of round-shaped bells[6] which hangs across the breast, and there are bell ornaments on the *karaṇḍa* head-dress, bracelets, and anklets.

Coomaraswamy is of the opinion that it represents a *yakṣa*-form of Gaṇeśa;[7] and he refers to an ancient Tibetan legend as possibly explaining the presence of the bells: A doorkeeper or *dvārapāla* of Vaiśālī, having died, was reborn as a demon. He begged the inhabitants of Vaiśālī to put up a statue to him in the form of a *yakṣa* and to hang a bell around his neck so that whenever they were in danger from their enemies he might sound the alarm by ringing the bell. This was done with great pomp and ceremony, and the inhabitants of Vaiśālī were ever after protected from their enemies by the foresight of the *yakṣa dvārapāla*.[8]

It is not impossible that the above statue of Gaṇeśa was destined to serve as

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[1] v. p. 41.

[2] v. p. 19. A photograph of this image was kindly shown to the author by Mr. Codrington, of the India Museum, London.

[3] v. Pl. 2 (*a*).

[4] v. Pl. 25 (*a*).

[5] v. Pl. 3 (*b*).

[6] *grelots*.

[7] *Yakṣa*, Part I, pp. 7 and 14.

[8] *Tibetan Tales*, trans. by Schiefner, p. 81.

'door-keeper' of a temple at Bhumāra. It will be seen below that in the Dakhan he was entrusted with the guardianship of the entrances to temples at a very early date; and it was also the custom, but somewhat later, in Nepal and west Tibet, to place his image over the main entrances to the *vihāras* as well as to the temples.

Curiously enough, on certain images of Gaṇeśa as late as the tenth or twelfth centuries,[1] hung around the trunk on a level with the tusks, is to be found a small bell of the size and shape of those on the necklace of the Bhumāra statue. From this, it seems apparent that the above legend, or a similar one, was known and was fairly popular much later than the Gupta period; but there is, however, little evidence of his having been looked upon as a *yakṣa*. His name does not appear on any of the lists of *yakṣas*, nor is he associated with them in puranic myths. It must be admitted, however, that his short, thick-set, and corpulent body resembles the *yakṣa* type.

Another Bhumāra statue which Coomaraswamy believes to be of the sixth century[2] is the earliest known representation of Gaṇeśa associated with his *śakti* whom he holds on the left hip.[3] He is nude and wears few jewels. On his forehead is a simple jewelled band, while the *devī*, on the contrary, is crowned with an ornate head-dress. He is four-armed, holding in the upper right, an axe, and grasping a broken tusk in his normal right hand. The upper left holds a sceptre and the normal left arm is around the *śakti*. His trunk turns to the left, lifting a cake from a bowl of cakes held by the *devī*. It is not surprising to find an image of Gaṇeśa of the sixth century holding the *śakti* for, as will be seen below, Śaktism was in great favour in India at that time; but the conception of this image, although of great simplicity, is so complete in every detail, and so masterly in execution, that it is difficult to believe that it was created *tout d'une fois*.

In these two Bhumāra sculptures, he seems to have been conceived as independent of any other deity or group of deities; while in the Dakhan, as well as in the Chālukya country between the fifth and eighth centuries, he was practically always represented either in attendance on important gods or accompanying a group of minor deities.

In the Chālukyan temples, Gaṇeśa was represented at the extreme left of the Saptamātṛkās, a group of Seven Divine Mothers[4] much in favour with the royal families of the Chālukyas, who were said to be under their special guardianship.[5]

Few sculptures, nevertheless, of the Seven Divine Mothers are to be found in the Chālukyan temples, while in the Kanarese temples, especially in that of Chenna Kesava at Belur, there are three fine slabs representing the group. The best preserved Chālukyan representation of the Saptamātṛkās is at Lakkandi in the temple of Kāśīviśveśvara, where they are all imaged with four arms holding their respective attributes, and under each *āsana* is the mount of the deity. Under the throne of Gaṇeśa is the rat.[6]

In the Chālukyan rock-cut temples, on the contrary, there are no examples of the Seven Divine Mothers. Gaṇeśa is figured in attendance on Śiva and never independently of a Śiva shrine.

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[1] v. Pl. 5 (*a*) and (*b*).

[2] *B. of the B.M. of F.A.*, vol. xxvi, no. 154, p. 30.

[3] v. Pl. 4 (*a*).

[4] v. p. 20.

[5] v. *The Chālukyan Arch. in the Kan. Dist.*, Cousens.

[6] Idem, Pl. LXXII.

At Bādāmī, the ancient capital of the Chālukyan kings, there are three series of Brahmanical rock-cut temples dating from the time of Pulikesi I. In the first of these is the celebrated sculpture of Śiva and Pārvatī as *ardhanārīśa*, that is, figured as one deity, the right half Śiva and the left side Pārvatī.[1] Burgess explains that it is 'a single body personifying the principle of life and production in its double aspect: the male or active principle under the name of *purusha* and the female or passive, under the name of *prakṛti*'. It will be seen below that Gaṇeśa was given this double aspect in China and Japan but differently presented.[2]

Outside of the Śaiva grotto-temple at Bādāmī and to the left of the pillared gallery is a spirited bas-relief of Śiva dancing the *tāṇḍava*, while at his feet is a small image of Gaṇeśa, the only representation at Bādāmī.[3] He is standing in a slightly dancing pose. Behind his head is a halo, and he has four arms of which two are broken. The normal left hand holds an attribute which may be a bowl of cakes, while the upper right seems to follow the movement of the dance.

In the third of these cave-temples is an inscription dated A.D. 579. Fergusson is of the opinion that if not contemporary, the other two were certainly executed before A.D. 700; but although this image of Gaṇeśa is thus the most ancient of all those found in grotto-temples in India, it is later than the sculpture of Gaṇeśa in the Chinese rock-cut temple of Kung-hsien, which is dated A.D. 531.[4]

At Aihole, where the rock-cut temples are believed to be among the most ancient in India, as well as at Bādāmī, Gaṇeśa is often found in attendance on Śiva when dancing the *tāṇḍava*.[5] In this case also he is figured standing in a slightly dancing pose. At Aihole he is lifting a cake with his trunk from a bowl in his left hand. This is possibly the *earliest example* of the attitude which later was adopted in practically every country where he was worshipped.

In the Dakhan the group of the Saptamātṛkās was in favour as early as the fifth century; and the popularity of Gaṇeśa associated with them is evident in all the temples and rock-cut sanctuaries.

In the cave-temples of Ellora, which are believed to be slightly later than those at Bādāmī, there are four important sculptures of the group of Gaṇeśa and the Seven Divine Mothers which were executed between the fifth and the tenth centuries. The most remarkable of the groups is in the celebrated Rāvaṇa-kā khāī,[6] where each Divine Mother, four-armed, holds a child (with the exception of Māheśvarī); and in a niche under each throne is the mount of the deity, but Gaṇeśa has a bowl of cakes in the niche instead of the usual rat.

The image of Gaṇeśa in the Rāvaṇa-kā khāī[7] is as powerful in conception as the two Bhumāra sculptures. The ears, trunk, and legs resemble those of the Gaṇeśa with the bells so closely that it seems possible, if they were of about the same period, that they were executed by the same person. They may be compared as to dignity and strength of conception with the most remarkable statues of the deity, such as the standing Cham image at Tourane[1] and the Javanese seated figure of the Dieng plateau.[2]

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[1] v. Pl. 6 (*a*).

[2] v. Pl. 38.

[3] v. Pl. 8 (*b*).

[4] v. p. 68 and Pl. 36 (*b*).

[5] v. Pl. 6 (*b*).

[6] *Cave Temples*, Fergusson and Burgess, Pl. LXXII, and *E. of H.I.*, Rao, vol. i, part ii, Pl. CXVII.

[7] v. Pl. 8 (*a*). Kindness of Mr. Codrington.

The other groups of the Saptamātṛkās are in the Rāmeśvara,[3] in cave XXII,[4] and in the Kailāsa grotto-temple; but they are all three much damaged at the left of the group, especially the images of the goddess Cāmuṇḍā and of Gaṇeśa, who is next to her. In all the other representations of Gaṇeśa in the various caves of the rock-cut temples of Ellora he is imaged in attendance on Śiva and is figured small and unimportant.

In the Laṅkeśvara of the Kailāsa grotto-temple there is a curious statue which seems to be unique of its kind. The goddess Umā (Pārvatī) stands between two fires,[5] which indicates, according to Burgess, that she is doing ascetic penance.[6] She is four-armed, and on her upper left hand she balances a small statue of Gaṇeśa, while on her upper right is a *liṅga*—symbol of Śiva. On the base of the statue, carved in relief, is a crocodile which is usually associated with the river goddess Gaṅgā,[7] who was mysteriously identified with Umā (Pārvatī) in ancient myths as the mother of Gaṇeśa.[8] The crocodile at the feet of Gaṇeśa is of special interest, as will be seen below when we come to study a *stela* of Gaṇeśa found in Burma.[9]

The same arrangement of deities was in favour in the Gujarat; and the Elephant-faced god was held in such favour that he was even to be found in Jain grotto-temples such as that at Chandor, where he was represented four-armed and seated with one leg pendant.

In central India at Bhera-ghat near Jubbulpur, there is a circular temple dedicated to the sixty-four Yoginīs (now called Gaurī-Śaṅkara) which is ascribed to the tenth century and is believed to have been built by the powerful reigning family of the Haihayas of Tripurī.

Inside the temple is a most interesting bas-relief of Gaṇeśa,[10] who is imaged four-armed and standing in a slightly dancing pose. He is nude and has a serpent girdle. On his head is an ornate *mukuṭa*, and above his forehead that is *high and flat* like the Nepalese images, he holds with his two upper arms a serpent, which is frequently seen on images of Gaṇeśa in Nepal but little known in India.[11] His trunk turns to the left in an unusual curve and then turns to the right, holding a *modaka* in the curled end.

The temple of the Gaurī-Śaṅkara is surrounded by a circular arcade in which are seated the sixty-four *yoginīs*, unfortunately much mutilated. Among these images is a Gaṇeśānī, a female form of Gaṇeśa.[12] Unlike Gaṇeśa, she has an attenuated waist, and like the Hindu goddesses, she has full breasts. The torso is nude except for an ornate *dhotī* and is ornamented with many jewels and bandelettes. One leg is pendant, while the left is bent before her on the *āsana*, with the knee supported by the left hand of a kneeling deity with the face of an elephant. She has four arms, but they are all broken at the elbows, and it is therefore impossible to know what attributes she held or even to conceive the position of her hands. The upper part of the head is remarkably modelled, especially where the skin is drawn over the right tusk, a detail which shows that the sculptor had considerable skill. Unfortunately the trunk is broken on a line with the tusk, but it is long enough to trace its turning to the left. The head-dress is a jewelled band above the forehead, behind which is a *mukuṭa*, and the ears are very large and flapping. This is the only feminine form of Gaṇeśa known to the author in India.

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[1] v. Pl. 25 (*d*).

[2] v. Pl. 30 (*d*).

[3] *Elura Temples*, Burgess, Pl. XXXIV, fig. I.

[4] Idem, Pl. XXXIV, fig. II.

[5] Possibly symbolizing the legend; p. 60.

[6] *Elura Temples*, Pl. XXX, fig. 2.

[7] Also the *makara*.

[8] *Elura Temples*, p. 32, and v. *stotra* in *Sanskrit Texts of Bali*, p. 36, line 17: '*Umāsutaṁ namayāmi gaṅgāputra namo namaḥ*'. Kindly translated for the author by Mr. Louis Finot.

[9] Pl. 24 (*a*).

[10] v. 'The Haihayas of Tripurī and their Monuments', Banerji, *Mem. of the Arch. Survey of India*, No. 23, Pl. XXXIV.

[11] Idem. There is another similar statue at Amarhatan Road, Dakhan; Pl. XLVII (*b*).

[12] v. Pl. 40.

As we have seen above, Gaṇeśa is not only to be found at the extreme left of the group of the Saptamātṛkās, but was also sometimes imaged in company with the Navagrahas (the Nine Planets), where he was always placed at the extreme right, next to the sun, Ravi. A carved Navagraha slab was found near the ancient ruins of Kaṅkaṇḍīghi,[1] where the images of the Nine Planets are represented standing in a row with Gaṇeśa, at the right, wearing the high *jaṭā-mukuṭa* of Śiva and carrying a rosary and battle-axe. These slabs have also been found in other districts, such as in the Orissan temples, where the Navagraha slabs were placed on the doorways as architraves; while in south India they were found in the enclosed verandahs around the main shrine. Only two Navagraha slabs have been found in Bengal with the image of Gaṇeśa accompanying the Nine Planets; but it is not known where these slabs were originally placed since there is no ancient temple in Bengal still standing. They were assuredly put in the temples as a protection from evil and possibly to ensure prosperity to the temple's founders.

At Ghatiyāla, near Jodhpur, there is an ancient column which is of special interest in that its inscription, dated A.D. 862, is the earliest *dated* inscription in India in praise of the Elephant-faced god. On the top of the column are four images of Gaṇeśa seated back to back, facing the four cardinal points and possibly representing the *dig-gajas* or the four elephants supposed to support the heavens in the four directions of the compass.

An unusual image of Gaṇeśa was found in the Tripura state in Bengal. The colossal sculptures, which are said to date between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, were carved in the perpendicular rock of the Unakoti hill, where a celebrated Śaiva sanctuary drew followers of Śiva in the eighth and ninth centuries. At the extreme left of the group is a seated, four-armed figure of Gaṇeśa 30 feet high,[2] while beside him are two standing elephant-headed attendants, having four tusks and four and six arms. They carry none of the attributes of Gaṇeśa, but hold a wheel, drum, bell, &c., and have *conch-shells in their ears*;[3] and while Gaṇeśa, nude to the waist, with a serpent belt holding in place a *dhotī* draped over his hips, is represented with the usual corpulence, the two standing figures have most attenuated waists. They are possibly local deities in some way associated with the Gaṇeśa cult. Unfortunately the colossal image of Gaṇeśa is too defaced to identify the attributes in his four hands. There are two statues at Hampi, one 20 and the other 30 feet high, while another colossal image of Gaṇapati is in the cave of Elephanta, where he is represented standing surrounded by a troup of *gaṇas*.

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[1] v. *The Ind. Hist. Quarterly*, vol. ix, no. i.

[2] *Arch. Surv. of I.*, 1921–2, Pl. XXX, fig. *a*.

[3] v. p. 16.

Gaṇeśa was sometimes figured in attendance on other important deities besides Śiva, as for example on an ancient sculptured slab discovered at Sonarang, where the Sun-god, Sūrya,[1] is represented accompanied by Gaṇeśa on the right and the Saptamātṛkās on the left. Above the Sun-god are the Navagrahas, who also figure above Śiva in the sculpture representing the Vaivāhika-mūrti.[2]

At Trichinopoly, as well as at Vallam, there are bas-reliefs of Gaṇeśa believed to be of the seventh century. At Trichinopoly, placed near the Śiva shrine, he is figured standing; while at Vallam, he is seated wearing a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* and balancing a *modaka* at the end of his trunk that is turned to the right, which is most unusual.[3] None of the attributes in the four hands may be identified with the exception of the lower right, which is possibly the broken tusk. He is seated in the *mahārājalīlā* pose, that is, with the right knee lifted and the left leg bent and reposing on the throne parallel with his body. It is an attitude seldom used for Gaṇeśa, probably on account of the difficulty that it presented to the sculptor because of his obesity. At any rate, this seventh-century bas-relief is probably the *earliest* representation of Gaṇeśa in the *mahārājalīlā* attitude.

Over the doorways of the Dakhan temples dedicated to Śiva[4] and above the dedicatory block, was always placed an image of Gaṇeśa, just as, in the Chālukyan temples, Gaja-Lakṣmī[5] was the presiding goddess. In the fine temple of Balsane in Khandesh, the east shrine contained the *liṅga*, while over the doorways of the south and north shrines were images of Gaṇeśa. At Pāṭṇa, above the dedicatory block and again above the image of Gaṇeśa, is the group of Saptamātṛkās accompanied by Gaṇeśa, always at the left, and Śiva at the right.

A sculpture of great interest was discovered in Bengal, at Dhānukā, which is of importance because it seems to indicate a transition stage from the classic Hindu form of Gaṇeśa to that showing Mahāyāna Buddhist influence.[6] He is seated on a lotus rising from the water which is vaguely indicated, while at the left is a lotus-bud and at the right a small lotus-flower on which reposes his right foot. His left leg is bent before him on the *padmāsana*, which is represented as in Mahāyāna Buddhist images with the last row of lotus-petals turned downward. The figure of Gaṇeśa, however, is Hindu in style. He wears the high *jaṭā-mukuṭa* of Śiva and many jewels: necklace, bracelets, anklets, as well as the Brahmanical thread. He has four arms. In his upper right he holds a symbol which is unknown, as a rule, in India: a large radish, attribute which is frequently met with on the Buddhist images of Gaṇeśa in Nepal and Tibet. As the pointed, broken tusk is seldom found in the hands of a Nepalese or Tibetan figure of Gaṇeśa, and as he is never represented in

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[1] *I. of B. and B.S.*, Bhattasali, Pl. LX.

[2] v. p. 33.

[3] *A.S. de l'I.*, J.-Dubreuil, II, Pl. XVI (*b*).

[4] *Med. Temples of the Dakhan*, Cousens.

[5] v. Pl. 12.

[6] v. Pl. 16 (*d*)

India or elsewhere carrying *both the radish and the broken tusk*, it seems probable, as suggested above, that the radish is a misinterpretation of the Hindu symbol of the tusk, often badly executed.

In the Munshiganj district, Dacca, a *stela* of the eleventh or twelfth century was found where Gaṇeśa is represented in a form seldom met with outside of Nepal.[1] He has five heads, but the arrangement of the heads in a circle differs again from the Nepalese Heramba[2] in that while the central head is normal in size, the two heads on either side are much smaller, their trunks, which hang over the shoulders, barely reaching to the breasts. Another difference is that the fifth head of the Nepalese Heramba is always on top.[3] Above the image of Heramba is a group of four one-headed, two-armed Gaṇeśas, with (slightly lower down,) another Gaṇeśa on either side which completes the group of seven, counting the Heramba. Like the Nepalese form, he is seated on a lion and has ten arms holding the usual symbols; but unlike the Heramba in Nepal, his forehead is broad and the eyes on the central head, placed far apart, are set obliquely with a protuberance between them such as will be met with in Indo-China.[4] At Negapatam, there is a remarkable bronze statue in one of the temples[5] which more closely follows the Nepalese form, the fifth head being on top; but the heads, instead of being long and narrow as in Nepal, follow the usual south Indian type. He is seated on a stylized lion. At Gol, Dacca, a *stela* was discovered where Gaṇeśa in dancing pose[6] is figured, on the contrary, as in Nepal, with the head *long* and *narrow*, but with this difference—that the bridge of the nose is well defined and the trunk seems to be the prolongation of the nose. The author knows of no other example of this aspect of the trunk outside of Borneo,[7] nor is she able to explain the presence of this strange and unique figure of Gaṇeśa in India.

Another interesting and ancient sculpture of Gaṇeśa was found in the Chamba state near the Balenī pass, representing him under an aspect which is perhaps unique. A sanctuary was discovered, dedicated to the serpent god Satūhr, popularly worshipped as 'Lord of the Cattle', where offerings are still placed before his shrine. Beside the slab of the Nāga was found a defaced image of Gaṇeśa, who was called by the worshippers '*gvālu*' or 'Cowherd' of the Nāga,[8] and many ex-votos testified to his popularity. This humble aspect was possibly based on an ancient legend where Brahmā, believing the ten-necked Rāvaṇa to be a negligible deity, once promised him, on account of his austerities, that he should never be conquered by god or super-man. Rāvaṇa, now practically invulnerable, set out to subjugate the gods and the Three Worlds. According to one of the versions, when Rāvaṇa subjugated Gaṇeśa, he forced him to work for him as a cowherd. From a simple cowherd, Gaṇeśa became 'Protector of Cowherds' when certain sects, as we have seen above, set up his worship as a human manifestation of Kṛiṣṇa, 'Protector of the Gopas and Gopīs' (cowherds). As a matter of fact, it should not be surprising to find Gaṇeśa associated with the cowherds, since one of the many epithets of Śiva was 'Protector of Cowherds'; and Rudra, the Vedic form of his father, Śiva, was appealed to both as 'Protector' and 'Destroyer of Cowherds'.

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[1] Pl. 4 (*b*). v. *E. I. School of M. Sculpt.*, by Banerji, Pl. LX (*a*).

[2] Five-headed form of Gaṇeśa.

[3] Form described in the *Mudgala-purāṇa*.

[4] v. Pl. 28 (*c*).

[5] *S.I.I.*, Sastri, fig. 112.

[6] *E.I. School of M. Sculpture*, Banerji, Pl. LX (*c*).

[7] v. Pl. 32 (*d*).

[8] *Indian Serpent Lore*, Vogel, p. 253.

Gaṇeśa is seldom to be found in a triad with other deities of more or less equal rank, but a stone sculpture of the eighth century,[1] now in the University Museum of Philadelphia, shows Gaṇeśa to the right of a goddess with Kuvera at her left. According to Coomaraswamy, the goddess is Śrī-Lakṣmī receiving the *abhiṣeka*, possibly because of the round-shaped symbols which she holds high above her head with her upper arms. The image is so defaced that they might easily be taken for vases out of which water should be pouring; but is it usual for Śrī-Lakṣmī to perform, herself, the *abhiṣeka*? The author has been unable to find a representation of the 'baptism' other than that of the Gaja-Lakṣmī group, that is, with the two elephants pouring the lustring waters over the goddess from vases held in their trunks.[2] A triad found in Java with Gaṇeśa in the group[3] may show that the goddess is no other than Guhyeśvarī; but as the Javanese triad is also badly broken, both of the two goddesses are difficult to identify.

In north-east India, especially in Bengal, stone sculptures have been found representing, according to Bhaṭṭaśali, the *Vaivāhika-mūrti* or marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī, and the *Sadyojāta* called the 'Mother and Child', which is believed by him to represent the birth of Gaṇeśa.

In the group of the *Vaivāhika-mūrti*,[4] Śiva and Pārvatī are represented in the centre. Śiva wears the high *jaṭā-mukuṭa* and has four arms. He carries the trident in his upper right, while with his normal right he holds the right hand of Pārvatī, which thus indicates the *pāṇigrahana* or marriage observance.[5] Sometimes, however, this is only indicated, as in the case where Pārvatī holds a casket[6] in her right hand and a mirror in her left, objects which are still carried by Hindu brides at the time of their marriage. The two gods are represented under the terraced roof of a temple with the Nine Planets figured above their heads, while below them, to the left of Pārvatī, is a small image of Gaṇeśa in a niche. He is four-armed, and his trunk is lifting cakes from the bowl in his normal left hand. To the right, in a corresponding niche, is his brother, Kārttikeya.

The Sadyojāta (child just born) is a very common group in north Bengal and was evidently a favourite one with the inhabitants of the Varendra or ancient Rāṛh in Bengal. The sculptures have not been found in temples but in deserted places, often under banyan trees, and many were discovered in the ruins of ancient Gaur.

The goddess Pārvatī is represented lying on her left side. The right hand supports her head and the left holds a lotus. Beside her is a small child on a lotus-flower, which indicates divine birth. Above her is a *liṅga* as well as two small images of Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya. The presence of the child lying beside her seems to be explained by a puranic myth in the following manner: When Pārvatī, the divine daughter of the Mountain, came to the Assembly of Gods where she was to choose a husband, Śiva, in order to test her, took on the form of a small babe and was discovered asleep on her lap. The goddess, in deep meditation, perceived that the child was, in reality, the great god Śiva and, pressing him to her breast, she left the Assembly of Gods.[1]

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[1] *Yakṣa*, Coomaraswamy, part ii, Pl. 8, p. 73.

[2] *Eastern Art*, Jan. 1929; *Early Indian Iconography*, Coomaraswamy.

[3] v. p. 59.

[4] v. Pl. 8 (*c*). The small image of Gaṇeśa at their feet, in Cave XXI at Ellora, is most unusual.

[5] *I. of B. and B.S.*, Bhaṭṭaśali, Pl. XLVIII.

[6] v. Pl. 6 (*a*).

It is interesting to note here that in the ancient Harvest Festival ceremonies to Gaṇeśa and Gaurī (Pārvatī), the goddess was believed to be secretly followed by Śiva, who hid under the outer folds of her *sārī*. In the ceremonies, he was represented by a cocoa-nut filled with rice.[2]

In the Sadyojāta group the 'Mother and Child' may represent Pārvatī and Śiva, and this seems possible since the presence of the *liṅga* indicates a Śaiva cult; and how, otherwise, explain the almost invariable presence of Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya beside the Mother and Child? Unfortunately, no inscriptions have been found to support Bhaṭṭaśali's theory that it represents the birth of Gaṇeśa, since in the group he is represented as a child while Kārttikeya is imaged fully grown.[3]

The above myth, however, does not correspond with any of the puranic accounts of the creation of the Elephant-faced god; and if it really represents the birth of Gaṇeśa, it is probably a purely local conception. As a matter of fact, the Sadyojāta group seems only to have been found in Bengal.

Pārvatī holding the child Gaṇeśa on her lap is practically never found either in stone sculptures or in Kāngrā miniatures, for although Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya were often represented with Pārvatī, it is invariably Kārttikeya who is seated on her lap while Gaṇeśa is playing beside her. A very unusual bronze from north India, belonging to the Prince zur Lippe, represents Gaṇeśa, however, as being held on her uplifted right knee. He wears a simple *jaṭā-mukuṭa*, and on his forehead is the crescent moon. The right tusk is broken and he has a serpent necklace. He is four-armed; but the only symbol that can be identified is a bowl in the normal right hand. A late porcelain group, which, as far as the author knows, is unique, represents Gaṇeśa in the arms of Pārvatī, who is seated on the left knee of Śiva.

The Rajput artists were fond of depicting scenes of the early childhood of Gaṇeśa. A miniature of the Kāngrā school, belonging to the Indian Museum, represents Śiva as Destroyer, seated in a grotto on a tiger-skin.[4] Behind him is the child Gaṇeśa peering over his shoulders. To his right, Pārvatī is seated holding Kārttikeya. Nandi the bull and Gaṇeśa's mount, the rat, are in attendance. Below are groups of adoring gods, *ṛishis*, and fakirs.

Another Kāngrā miniature, also belonging to the Indian Museum, represents Śiva in his form of Bhūteśvara (Lord of Ghosts) seated on a tiger-skin on a place of cremation (for in this form he is believed to frequent cemeteries). Around his neck is a serpent necklace. His hair is matted, and above his forehead with its third eye, is a crescent moon. He is naked to the waist, and his body is smeared with ashes gathered from funeral pyres. Beside him is Pārvatī holding Kārttikeya while standing to the right, is the child Gaṇeśa, four armed, who is grasping with his two normal hands the end of a garland of human skulls which Śiva, in this form, usually wears.[1] Śiva is stringing the heads while Kārttikeya is handing him a head from a pile of human skulls which are yet to be strung.

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[1] *I. of B. and B.S.*, Bhaṭṭaśali, p. 138, Pls. LIII and LV.

[2] *Harvest Festivals of G. and G.*, Gupte.

[3] *I. of B. and B.S.*, Bhaṭṭaśali, p. 138, and v. *Brahmā-purāṇa*, chap. xxxviii, p. 177.

[4] v. Pl. 9 (*b*).

A Rajput drawing owned by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts represents Śiva as *Gaṅgā-dhara*, 'Upholder of the Ganges'.[2] He is in his form of Mahā-yogi: naked to the waist, smeared with ashes, a serpent around his neck, and his matted hair drawn up in a high chignon. He is seated on a tiger-skin on the border of a cliff with Pārvatī to the left. Out of his head-dress flows the river Ganges; and Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya, at his right, are holding out vessels *to collect the sacred water*. Underneath the cliff is the Saint Bhagīratha. According to puranic myth, the heavenly goddess Gaṅgā-Bhaṭṭārikā was drawn down against her will from the heavens by the prayers of the Saint Bhagīratha, who had remained for a whole year with upraised arms, refusing all nourishment and standing continually on one toe. In great wrath at being drawn down to earth, she warned the gods of the great disaster that would result from the shock of her fall; but Śiva 'caught the river on his brow and checked its course with his matted hair', hence his name: Upholder of the Ganges.

It is interesting to note here that the water-vessel (*kalaśa*) which is sometimes carried by Gaṇeśa[3] is believed to contain, according to the *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra*, the sacred water collected from the river Gaṅgā. Gaṇeśa is represented in paintings rather than in sculptures when carrying the *kalaśa*; but there is a small bronze image in the British Museum where he holds the water-vessel in his trunk.

In the Kāngrā paintings Gaṇeśa was, as a rule, represented in attendance on Śiva; but there is a Rajput miniature in the British Museum where Śiva is only indicated by his mount, the bull, beside which is Gaṇeśa, while Pārvatī is seated under a tree with Kārttikeya beside her.[4] Gaṇeśa was rarely represented in the Kāngrā miniatures as an independent deity, but in the Bibliothèque Nationale there is a Rajput miniature of the eighteenth century in a scroll manuscript of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*[5] where he is represented without other deities. He is seated on a throne and is four-armed. He wears a crown, and his head is painted red, but his ears and neck are pink, giving the impression that the elephant-face is a mask. Behind his head is a *śiraścakra*. To the right, seated on a lotus, is a female playing on a *vīṇā*; and to the left, another female attendant is standing, holding a fly-whisk. There is a Kāngrā miniature, also in the British Museum, representing Gaṇeśa seated with a female attendant on either side of his throne, while in the India Museum of London there is a plaster cast from a seventeenth-century mould where he is flanked on both sides by female attendants. Are these two attendants to be looked upon as his consorts, Buddhi and Siddhi?

According to ancient tradition, Gaṇeśa was a Brahmacārin, that is, an unmarried deity; but legend gave him two consorts, personifications of Wisdom (Buddhi) and Success (Siddhi). In ancient representations he was never figured with his two consorts; but at an early epoch, as will be seen below, he was imaged with a *devī* seated beside him sometimes called Lakṣmī.[1] In this form, he was worshipped by those followers of the *Vāmācāra*[2] doctrine who admitted 'wine and women' in their ceremonies.[3] The Gāṇapatya sect conceived five esoteric forms of Gaṇeśa, called Śakti-Gaṇapati; and Śaktism evolved a complicated doctrine in which eight personifications of Success or the *Aṣṭa-Siddhis*[4] were to be worshipped as being one *devī*, the *śakti* of Gaṇeśa.

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[1] v. Pl. 9 (*a*).

[2] v. Pl. 10 (*a*).

[3] v. Pl. 1 (*a*).

[4] v. Pl. 10 (*b*).

[5] v. Pl. 11.

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[1] v. Pl. 3 (*a*).

[2] That is: 'left-handed'.

[3] *Shakti and Shākta*, Sir J. Woodroffe, p. 89.

[4] v. p. 12.

CHAPTER IV

INDIA, NEPAL, CHINESE TURKESTAN, TIBET: GAṆEŚA IN BUDDHISM

THE popularity of Gaṇeśa as Siddhidātā, Bestower of Success, was not confined to the Brahman cult, for his adoration was taken over by the Buddhists, who claimed that a mystic *mantra* in praise of Gaṇeśa, called the *Gaṇapati-hṛdaya*,[1] was disclosed to Ānanda by the Buddha himself at Rājagṛha. They personified the *mantra* in the form of a goddess named Gaṇapatihṛdayā, who, according to Bhaṭṭacharyya,[2] was probably looked upon as the *śakti* of Gaṇeśa. The *mantra*, however, refers only to Gaṇeśa and contains a *sādhana* to be used in his invocation, when he is to be conceived as being red of hue, standing in a dancing attitude, as having twelve arms holding Tantric symbols, and as possessed of a third eye as well as of both his tusks.

In a Nepalese leaf-book of the fifteenth century there is a miniature of Gaṇeśa as described above, with the *sādhana* to be used in his invocation.[3] The priest, after contemplating this image (having previously prepared himself for the ceremony by fasting &c.), should recite the *Gaṇapati-hṛdaya-mantra* which begins: *Namo Bhagavate Āryagaṇapatihṛdayāya*; and after invoking Gaṇeśa, he should put before him the desiderata of his client. The *mantra* was believed to be most powerful, and when recited by the priest or worn as an amulet was said to be infallible in obtaining all that was desired.

There is, however, no mention of Gaṇeśa in the Nepalese Buddhist leaf-book of the beginning of the eleventh century which is in the Cambridge University Library, nor is he represented in the miniatures of the celebrated Buddhist leaf-book of about this period which is in the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. We know, nevertheless, that he was taken over by the Buddhists before this time.

His image may be found on Buddhist sculptures of the late Gupta period such as at Sārnāth, where, on a small fragment representing the death of the Buddha, he is figured on his rat among the deities assisting at the *parinirvāṇa* of the Master.[4] He may not be considered, however, as a Buddhist deity in this instance, since he is figured in a group with his brother, Kārttikeya, the Navagrahas, and other Brahman deities; but it is of special interest to find him in this Buddhist sculpture because it furnishes a transition stage between his Hindu and Buddhist representations.

We find him in later Buddhist art in India, not only in the form of the Buddhist god Vināyaka, but in a Hindu demon form also called Vināyaka. In the later role he was not represented in India as in Nepal and Tibet, under the feet of an important deity, but as crouching on all fours, under the lotus throne of a fighting Buddhist divinity. Stone images have been found in Bengal where Gaṇeśa, the Hindu demon, is thus figured under the *padmāsana* of the Buddhist goddess Bhṛkuṭī-Tārā[5] as well as under the lotus throne of Parṇaśavarī.[1] In this latter case he is prostrate, holding both the sword and shield, and is evidently to be conceived as vanquished by the goddess.

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[1] *Nepalese Buddhist Literature*, Mitra, p. 89.

[2] *I.B.I.*, p. 157.

[3] v. Pl. 1 (*b*).

[4] *Iconographie Buddhique de l'Inde*, A. Foucher, vol. i, fig. 30.

[5] *I. of B. and B.S.*, Bhaṭṭaśali, Pl. XIX.

As the Buddhist *god*, Vināyaka, he was represented in a dancing attitude and is rarely met with except in paintings. This form is called Nṛtta-Gaṇapati and was not only popular in north India but was adopted in Nepal and found its way into Tibet.

In India, the Nṛtta-Gaṇapati if painted is to be conceived as yellow in colour. He is figured with the right leg bent with the foot on the lotus throne; while the left, somewhat more bent, holds the foot in the air in a dancing attitude. The Hindu form has usually four arms but may have as many as eight, carrying the usual symbols—tusk, bowl of cakes, lasso, elephant goad, &c.—but having one arm free to follow the movement of the dance.

In Nepal, on the contrary, the Nṛtta-Gaṇapati is to be conceived as red of hue.[2] He does not stand directly on the lotus throne but on his *vāhana*, the rat, green in colour and holding in its mouth a *cintāmaṇi*. The right leg is represented as in the Indian form, while the left, on the contrary, is bent almost double, the foot touching the serpent girdle. He has a third eye and wears a crown ornamented with *cintāmaṇis*. His usual form has twelve arms and carries Tantric symbols as well as the symbols that are held by the Hindu form, with the two following exceptions. The Nepalese form *seldom carries the tusk* but in its place is usually figured a radish, possibly, as suggested above, through a misinterpretation of the Hindu symbol. The second exception is the *modaka*, which, as we have also said above, is replaced by a *cintāmaṇi* in Nepal; and instead of wearing a garland of skulls, in this Tantric form like the *dharmapālas* he has a garland of *cintāmaṇis* falling to the knees.

The Nṛtta-Gaṇapati is represented in a Nepalese painting surrounded by four Vināyakas,[3] making an assembly of five deities, which fact seems to indicate a Buddhist rather than a Brahman group for two reasons: first, because five was a favourite number with the Mahāyānists for grouping their gods; secondly, because each deity is of a different colour which was invariably the case in a group of five deities of Mahāyāna Buddhism. There is a Buddhist temple in Nepal dedicated to the Five Gaṇapatis, where possibly the fifth and central figure is Sūrya-Vināyaka. If, however, the miniature referred to above is Brahmanic, the central figure may be Gaṇapati-Vināyaka, surrounded by four manifestations of himself.

It is not known at what date the worship of Gaṇeśa was first introduced into Nepal, but as referred to above, there is a legend to the effect that the daughter of the Buddhist king Aśoka founded a temple in Nepal which was dedicated to him.[4] Near *Zimpi-Taudu* there is an ancient Nepalese temple dedicated to Gaṇeśa[5] in which there are *stelas* with inscriptions dating from the eighth to the tenth centuries; but the actual date of the foundation of the temple is unfortunately unknown. It is safe to say, nevertheless, that already by the tenth century the popularity of Gaṇeśa was gaining ground in Nepal as in India; and that Vināyaka, 'Remover of

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[1] *I. of B. and B.S.*, Pl. XXIII (*a*) and (*b*).

[2] v. Pl. 20 (*a*).

[3] Called: Rakta-Vināyaka, Candra-Vināyaka, Siddhi-Vināyaka, Aśoka-Vināyaka.

[4] *S.I.I.*, Sastri, p. 168.

[5] *Le Népal*, Sylvain Lévi, vol. II, p. 345.

Obstacles', had been incorporated into the Nepalese pantheon at an early date, drawing worshippers from among Brahmans and Buddhists alike, and finding favour with the humble as well as with the Great Ones of Nepal.

The Nepalese Buddhists had their own legends with regard to the Elephant-faced god and claimed that he manifested himself to a mythical king, Vikramajit by name, to whom he brought untold blessings, mostly in the form of riches.

None of the Hindu legends in regard to the creation of Gaṇeśa was accepted by the Nepalese. Neither Śiva nor Pārvatī was believed to have participated in his advent, for, of his own free will, he became visible in a ray of sunshine; hence his name *Sūrya-Vināyaka.* The Brahmans claimed that he appeared in this form in order to bring to life the son of a Brahman.[1]

Little is known, however, in regard to the representation of Sūrya-Vināyaka, who was always worshipped unaccompanied by other gods like the esoteric images of Gaṇeśa in India. It is possible that this form was Tantric, for the ceremonies in connexion with his worship, that is, offerings of coagulated blood and bloody sacrifices, would indicate Tantric rites; but in the principal sanctuary of a temple dedicated to Sūrya-Vināyaka there is an image of Gaṇapati where nothing indicates a Tantric form, should this be his actual manifestation as Sūrya-Vināyaka. He is represented in the classic fashion, with one head and four arms, holding an axe, bowl of cakes, broken tusk, and rosary, and is standing on the rat.

The Nepalese images of Gaṇapati, with the exception of his Heramba form, are one-headed, and the elephant face has this particularity in Nepal that it is long and narrow and rather flat with the eyes set obliquely. There is often the third eye or else, especially if the image belongs to the Hindu cult, a Śaiva *tilaka* of three horizontal lines. In fact, Gaṇeśa may have both the third eye and the *tilaka.* He possesses many arms, ranging from four to sixteen, and may be represented seated, but is more often standing, and as a rule, on the rat. He may wear a curious pleated skirt with ornate hangings.[2]

At Katmandu there are two unusual stone statues of Gaṇeśa with a rat under each foot.[3] Both images are one-headed but one has four, whereas the other has sixteen, hands, and both embrace the *śakti* with the normal left arm.

Gaṇeśa wearing the serpent girdle and serpent Brahmanical thread is common to all countries where he is worshipped; but Gaṇeśa holding the serpent-god Śeṣa over his head like Śiva in one of his dancing forms as Naṭarāja,[4] with few exceptions is known only to Nepal.[5] In both cases the head of the serpent is grasped in the upper right hand and the tail in the upper left.

Doubtless the Nepalese were acquainted with the north India dancing form of Śiva holding the *nāga* as a canopy over his head; and it is therefore not surprising to find the serpent Śeṣa adopted in Nepal for certain representations of Gaṇeśa in dancing attitude. As Śiva's son, he was sometimes given the jewelled head-dress of Śiva, the *kirīṭa-mukuṭa* as well as the crescent-moon-*tilaka,* while in Tibet and

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[1] *Le Népal,* Sylvain Lévi, vol. i, p. 384.

[2] v. Pl. 34 (*c*).

[3] v. Pl. 17 (*c*).

[4] *I.I. of B. and B.S.,* Bhaṭṭaśali, Pl. XLV.

[5] There is one such statue in the Gaurī-Śaṅkara temple near Jubbulpur, v. p. 29, n. 10.

Mongolia he sometimes carried Śiva's symbol, the trident. In Java, as will be seen below, Gaṇeśa was imaged with the skull ornaments of Śiva as Destroyer. In fact, in all countries where he has been worshipped, images of Gaṇeśa have been found in which he is identified with his father Śiva.

Heramba, on his lion mount, was perhaps the most popular form of Gaṇeśa in Nepal, where he was represented with ten arms, and as a rule, embracing his *śakti*.[1] The Heramba form always has five heads, which are either arranged as in India in two tiers—one head above the central head which has a head on either side and one at the back—or an arrangement of heads in three tiers, which form is only found in Nepal—a head on either side of the central head which has a head above it and still another above the head on the second tier. The *vāhana* of Heramba is the lion; but an unusual image of Heramba was found at Bhatgaon, dated A.D. 1695,[2] which has a rat instead of a lion for *vāhana*, while a bronze image now in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Munich has a rat under one foot and a lion under the other.[3]

A Heramba form of Gaṇeśa found in Nepalese paintings conforms with various Mahāyāna-Buddhist representations of deities, and was popular with the Brahmans as well as with the Buddhists in Nepal. Gaṇapati is figured as usual with five heads, of which the central head, as well as the body, arms, and legs, like the Buddhist deity Avalokiteśvara, is white.[4] The head to the right is blue; to the left, yellow; above the central head, green; and the top head is red. On the forehead of each head is a third eye, on both sides of which is the Śaiva *tilaka*, that is, three horizontal lines; and one head wears the five-leafed crown. He has twelve arms. The normal left hand balances a bowl of cakes under the trunk, while the normal right grasps a tusk-shaped radish, holding it as if about to put it in the place of the missing tusk. All the other symbols are Tantric. He steps to the right like the *dharmapāla* of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and under each foot is a rat.

Gaṇeśa has a more tranquil aspect in Nepal when represented as a *dvarapāla* guarding the entrance to Buddhist monasteries. He always has for *vis-à-vis*, to the right, the Tibetan god Mahākāla whose worship was brought into Nepal by the learned Bandhudatta, contemporary of Hsüan-tsang.[5] Although the 'Great Black One' was the most popular deity in Tibet, he never drew worshippers to any extent in Nepal where his image is rarely met with except in this role of guardian of the monasteries.[6]

In north India, as well as in Chinese Turkestan, Gaṇeśa was never adopted as *dvarapāla*. The entrance to the Buddhist monasteries was guarded by Mahākāla to the right and the Yakṣī Hāritī to the left. Although Gaṇeśa was thus replaced by Hāritī as guardian of *vihāras* in Chinese Turkestan, he was, nevertheless, most popular in Khotan.[7] In fact, he drew worshippers in all the Buddhist temples in northern Asia that had fallen under the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

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[1] v. *S.I.I.*, Sastri, fig. 112.

[2] Mentioned in the list of forms of Gaṇeśa in Nepal. Kindness of His Holiness Gururāj K. Sarman.

[3] v. Pl. 19.

[4] v. Pl. 21 (*a*).

[5] *Le Népal*, Sylvain Lévi, vol. I, p. 384.

[6] In the Nepalese Harvest Festivals, Pārvatī (Kumārī) is represented by a young girl accompanied by two boys, representing Gaṇeśa and Mahākāla. *Nipal*, by Oldfield.

[7] *Ancient Khotan*, Sir Aurel Stein, pp. 251 and 431.

Bronze tablets and painted wooden panels were discovered in the sand near the *stūpa* of Endere, representing Gaṇeśa either in the classic Indian form, or, as on one of the painted panels, with certain characteristics peculiar to Chinese Turkestan.[1] In the latter case he is represented four-armed and wears a tiger-skin *dhoṭi* over tight-fitting trousers (*paijāma*) which are dark brown in colour. According to Sir Aurel Stein[2] he is seated on a cushion; but an interesting feature of this painting is that the cushion seems to be, in reality, another pair of legs.[3] In Japan, as will be seen below, there is a four-armed, *four-legged* form of Gaṇeśa worshipped in secret by the esoteric sects, which is looked upon as a fusion of the 'double form' called Kangi-ten.[4] Possibly there is some such idea in this painted panel.

His face is yellow in colour but his body, bare to the waist, is pink outlined in red. This is contrary to the Indian Dvi-dehaka, who, as seen above, has the face red and the body yellow. On some of the painted panels in Chinese Turkestan, however, he has both the face and body yellow. He usually wears a crown but practically never a *mukuṭa*, and may have a nimbus. The head is always slightly turned to the right, but the trunk turns to the left as in the painted panel found in the ruins of the Endere *stūpa*.[5] The trunk, however, in the painting at Endere, does not hang straight as in the usual representation of Gaṇeśa but turns to the left almost at once and then hangs downward and turns *outward*. His normal right hand holds a bowl of cakes in front of him, but the trunk is not lifting a cake from the bowl as in the classic Indian forms. The upper right arm carries a kind of spear-shaped *chedikā*;[6] the upper left grasps what was probably the axe, while the normal left balances a radish (white) at his breast. He wears many jewels: necklace, bracelets, and anklets.

In the cave temples of Bäzäklik there are several frescos in which Gaṇeśa is figured seated, with six arms, holding the sun and moon, a banner, and a round-shaped object against his breast which may be the *modaka*. He wears many jewels, and behind his head is a nimbus.[7]

The interesting feature of these frescos of Gaṇeśa is that the elephant-face does not follow the usual representations of the god, for the trunk is a short prolongation of the nose and the end of the trunk somewhat resembles the snout of a wild boar. The image, however, seems to be Gaṇeśa rather than Varāha for two reasons: first, because, in this same form, he is found again in cave No. 32 in company with his brother, Kārttikeya; and in cave No. 7 in a group with Śiva, Kārttikeya, and Mahākāla. Second, because in these same frescos of Bäzäklik, a deity is represented with the head of a wild boar which in no way resembles the head of the above six-armed deity. The boar-headed deity is found in cave No. 9,[8] where two *dvarapālas* guarding the entrance to the temple are figured about to tread on animal-headed demons. On one side, the *pāriṣada* has the head of a wild boar; on the opposite side, the demon has the head of an elephant. If one compares the heads of the two

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[1] v. Pl. 35.

[2] *Ancient Khotan*, p. 442.

[3] v. p. 85.

[4] v. p. 81.

[5] v. *Ancient Khotan*, Pl. LXXVIII, vol. ii.

[6] Which Prof. A. Foucher believes to have (like Mañjuśrī's sword) a symbolic meaning.

[7] v. Fig. 4 and *Altbuddh. Kultst. Chin. Turkestan*, Grünwedel, p. 238, fig. 510.

[8] *Chotscho*, von Le Coq, p. 32.

pāriṣadas with that of the six-armed deity, it will be found that the elephant-head of the demon resembles more closely that of the deity in the group with Kārttikeya than does the boar-head of the other *pāriṣada.* At any rate, if the deity is Varāha and not Gaṇeśa, the presence of the boar-headed god in company with Śiva and Kārttikeya would be most unusual.

The popularity of Gaṇeśa in Nepal and Chinese Turkestan did not follow him to Tibet. His worship as an important deity was never set up by the Tibetans; and although he may have had a certain following, he was never enrolled in the Tibetan pantheon of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Even in west Tibet, where images of the Elephant-faced god are often met with, he was not looked upon as an object of worship but rather as a powerful guardian against demons and other evil spirits. In spite of this reputation, he was not entrusted, as in Nepal, with the guarding of the monasteries; but his image was placed, however, as guardian above the main entrance to Tibetan temples, both Buddhist and Brahmanic.

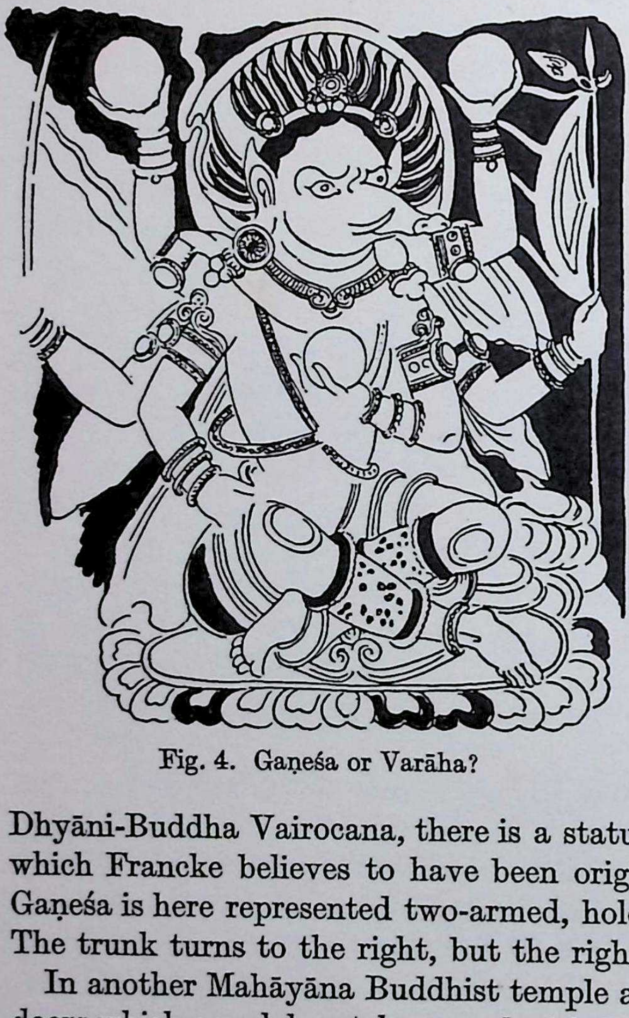

Fig. 4. Gaṇeśa or Varāha?

At Nirmand, an image of Gaṇeśa over the door guards the entrance to a Hindu temple dedicated to Śiva in *liṅga* form,[1] while near the famous Gelugpa monastery at Tabo, in a Buddhist temple dedicated to the Dhyāni-Buddha Vairocana, there is a statue of Gaṇeśa beside the main sanctuary which Francke believes to have been originally placed above the entrance door. Gaṇeśa is here represented two-armed, holding the bowl of cakes in the left hand. The trunk turns to the right, but the right hand is broken.[2]

In another Mahāyāna Buddhist temple at Tabo[3] he is imaged above the wooden doors which are elaborately carved with Buddhist deities; and at a temple of Lha-khang there is a painting of Gaṇeśa on the wall above the doors of the principal entrance.[4]

But if Gaṇeśa was accorded the role of *dvarapāla* in Indian Tibet, in Tibet proper he was degraded to the point of being trodden under foot by his former *vis-à-vis* when guarding the Nepalese temples, that is, Mahākāla, the most popular *dharmapāla* in Tibet. In this prostrate form, Gaṇeśa was known to the Tibetans as the Hindu demon Vināyaka, enemy of the Faith and hence to be crushed by the 'Defender of the Law', the Great Black One.

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[1] *Antiq. I.T.*, Francke, vol. i, p. 6.

[2] Idem, Pl. XVII and p. 38.

[3] Idem, p. 42.

[4] Idem, p. 91.

When lying under the feet of Mahākāla he was usually represented without a crown but wearing a complicated and ornate costume and many jewels. He had rarely more than two arms and might hold a bowl in his right hand while his left is in *tarjanī-mudrā*.

The Tibetans conceived a female as well as a male form of Gaṇeśa. In the *Pantheon of the Tschangtcha Hutuktu* there is reference not only to a single form of Gaṇapati under the feet of Mahākāla but to a group where *Mahākāla* crushes an image of Gaṇapati under each foot, one male and the other female.[1] This is consistent with the Tibetan conception of their deities, for as a *dharmapāla* was believed to be more powerful when manifesting with his feminine counterpart or *śakti*, so would the triumph of Mahākāla over the Hindu demon be more complete with one foot crushing the female and the other the male form of Gaṇapati. Tibet was not the only country to conceive a female form of Gaṇeśa, as will be seen below.

Gaṇeśa, however, is not always represented completely prostrate when under the feet of fighting deities. Buddhist statues from both Nepal and Tibet figure him in two poses, one lying on his left side with the body partially raised and leaning on the left arm. In this position he is under the feet of a peaceful deity, while in the other attitude where he is half raised, half kneeling, there is a fierce deity towering over him.

When in the former pose he is to be conceived as vanquished by the goddess Aparājitā, who, according to *dhāraṇīs*, in one of her peaceful forms such as Pīta-aparājitā should be represented two-armed and seated with one foot on Gaṇeśa.[2]

According to certain *sādhanas*, however, she should be conceived standing with her left foot on the left leg of Gaṇeśa, in which pose she is called *Gaṇapatisamākrāntā* or 'she who tramples on Gaṇapati'.[3] Or she may have one foot posed on his left hip and the other on his head; but he is, however, never to be considered absolutely vanquished even if represented completely prostrate, in which case he carries a dagger (phurbu) in his right hand.[4]

When in the half-kneeling pose he is under the feet of Vighnāntaka, 'Destroyer of Obstacles', and a powerful Nepalese Buddhist deity. The word *vighna* (obstacle) when found in the *Sādhanamālā* usually referred to Gaṇeśa, but it was used for another deity in a Nepalese legend which explains how the Nepalese Buddhist 'Destroyer of Obstacles' was created, and runs as follows: A *paṇḍit* from Oḍiyāna was performing special rites on the bank of the river Bagmati near Katmandu, in order to attain a certain stage of perfection or *siddhi*. Gaṇeśa, wishing to prevent the pious Buddhist from attaining *siddhi*, put insurmountable obstacles in his way. The *paṇḍit*, unable to perform the required rites, invoked, in great distress, the Buddhist 'Destroyer of Obstacles', who appeared in the fierce form of Vighnāntaka, and Gaṇeśa was overcome.

The Nepalese 'Destroyer of Obstacles' is imaged with six or eight arms.[5] As a rule, he holds in his upper right arm a sword and in his upper left the buckler.

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[1] v. Pl. 17 (*a*) and *Pantheon*, Pander, Pl. 230 and p. 92.

[2] *Dhāraṇī Cult*, Waddell, p. 193.

[3] *I.B.I.*, Bhaṭṭacharyya, Pl. XL (*a*).

[4] Idem, Pl. XLII (*a*).

[5] v. Pl. 18 (*a*) and (*d*).

The normal hands are before his breast grasping Tantric symbols, the chopper and a *kapāla*, or else he holds the bowl of cakes; while with his left hand he makes the *abhaya mudrā*. He wears a high five-leafed crown and has the third eye as well as *yakṣa* fangs. He towers over Gaṇeśa, who is kneeling with the legs stretched, from the knees to left and right. Vighnāntaka stands on the feet of Gaṇeśa, who wears a crown with many jewels and in his normal right hand holds the bowl, while the normal left makes, like that of Vighnāntaka, a gesture of protection. The symbols in the other two hands may vary.

Thus the Nepalese Buddhist 'Destroyer of Obstacles' is figured bringing the Hindu 'Lord of Obstacles' to his knees; but Gaṇeśa, in making the *abhaya mudrā*, proclaims his unvanquished power.

Bhaṭṭacharyya refers to the interesting fact that whereas the Trimūrti, that is, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva accompanied by Indra, are to be found grouped under the feet of Mārīcī or of Trailokyavijaya, Gaṇeśa is *always alone* when under the feet of a fighting Buddhist deity; doubtless because as 'Creator of Obstacles' he was believed to be the greater danger to the successful propagation of Buddhism.

Although he is also to be found in a Tibetan group in the same position as in the above Nepalese images, Gaṇeśa was conceived in Tibet as overcome and *conquered* by the Tibetan god Mahākāla. He is represented kneeling on the lotus throne, his legs stretched to the right and the left on an angle with his body.[1] Mahākāla steps to the right with his feet posed on the feet of Gaṇeśa, who is two-armed, holding with his left hand the usual bowl and grasping in his uplifted right his broken tusk. He is one-headed and without a crown.

Gaṇeśa is found in Tibet under the feet of another deity who is none other than the great Dhyāni-Bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī, in his Tantric form designated as 'Black' Mañjuśrī.[2] The Tibetan god of Wisdom in this manifestation is represented fierce in expression and should have the third eye. Above his forehead is a simple crown, and behind it, his upstanding hair is drawn into a high chignon in which is seated his Dhyāni-Buddha, Akshobhya. His right hand holds the sword above his head in the same attitude as in his mild forms, while his left grasps what seems to be a coiled serpent.[3] Grünwedel, describing his illustration of the 'Black' Mañjuśrī, calls the object in his left hand a 'lotus with coiled stem'. What seems, in the bronze image, to be the head of a serpent may, therefore, be a lotus-bud; or is he carrying the celestial creeper, the stem of which is also represented as coiled? At any rate, he has serpents for bracelets and anklets, and a serpent is tied across his breast. He steps to the right with his foot on the head of Gaṇeśa, but unlike the other groups described above his left foot is posed directly on the lotus *āsana*.

Under the feet of Mañjuśrī, Gaṇeśa lies on his back with his head turned to the right. There are no symbols in his hands; but a detail of interest is that, unlike the above groups, Gaṇeśa is represented unmistakably *as a Hindu deity* and not as a demon, for he wears the *jaṭā-mukuṭa* of Śiva. Since Mañjuśrī is looked upon as 'Lord of Wisdom' by the Mahāyāna Buddhists, and Gaṇeśa as 'God of Wisdom' by the Hindus, may not this group symbolize the triumph of Buddhism over Brahmanism?

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[1] v. Pl. 17 (*d*).

[2] *Myth. Buddh.*, Grünwedel, p. 139, fig. 111.

[3] v. Pl. 18 (*b*).

The Tibetan saint P'ags-pa carried Mahāyāna Buddhism into Mongolia in the thirteenth century and converted the emperor Khubilai. Mahākāla was represented to the Mongols as being none other than a manifestation of Śiva. It was therefore only natural that Gaṇeśa, as Śiva's son, should acquire a certain popularity among them; and he figures in a Mongolian legend that runs as follows: Before the birth of the saint P'ags-pa, his father invoked Gaṇeśa, who, appearing to him, took him up with his trunk and carried him to the top of Mount Meru, and showing him the country of Mongolia, said: 'Thy son shall subjugate this whole country',[1] which proved to be true.

Gaṇeśa also figures among the *Five Hundred Gods of sNar-t'an*, in the form of the Nṛtta-Gaṇapati, that is, in dancing attitude. His left foot is posed on the rat with a jewel (*cintāmaṇi*) in its mouth. The right leg is bent, the foot touching the serpent girdle. He has only one head, upon which is a five-leafed crown, and in his four arms he carries the axe, radish, and bowl of cakes, while in his normal right he *holds the trident* which is a symbol of Śiva but seldom carried by the Elephant-faced god.[2]

[1] *Myth. Buddh.*, Grünwedel, p. 66.

[2] Idem, fig. 43.

CHAPTER V

GAṆEŚA IN BURMA, SIAM, INDO-CHINA

THE gradual occupation of Indo-China by Hindu emigrants began at a very early date, possibly in the early centuries preceding our era.[1] The peaceful invaders came by sea or overland via Burma; and the slow process of Indianization brought with it the adoption of Brahmanism as well as Buddhism, and the worship of Indian gods.

As innumerable small images of Gaṇeśa have been found in Burma, Siam, and west Indo-China which are Hindu in type, it is thought that they were probably brought to these countries by Indian traders who carried them along with their merchandise in order to propitiate the 'Remover of Obstacles' and thus secure success in their commercial enterprises. Strangely enough, no small Hindu images of this type have been found in east Indo-China although Śaivism was flourishing there as early as in Cambodia. From this it seems probable that the worship of Gaṇeśa was introduced into Champa by Hindu devotees or Brahman priests rather than by Indian traders.

Burma was the first *étape* in the eastward exodus of the Hindus from north-east India. Crossing the Bay of Bengal, they found the population of the deltaic region of lower Burma, which was inhabited by the Mōn, given over to a form of Hīnayānist Buddhism hostile to the cult of gods and goddesses. The trader-colonists succeeded, however, in setting up their deities at an early date, if we judge from the images of Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Gaṇeśa, and other Hindu gods, dating from the sixth and seventh centuries, that have been found in lower Burma.[2] Upper Burma, on the contrary, was Mahāyānist, and Tantric Mahāyānism, with its pantheon of gods and goddesses, was in favour as late as the eleventh century. When Brahmanism spread to north Burma, a more fertile field was thus found for the introduction of the Hindu gods; and while in lower Burma no Brahman deity was allowed in a Buddhist temple, in upper Burma, as seen in the Shwesandaw pagoda at Pagan, for example, Gaṇeśa in company with other Hindu gods was placed in guard of the ancient Buddhist shrine.

Although statues of Gaṇeśa have been found in upper and lower Burma, his popularity was greatest with the commercial population in the deltaic region, where great numbers of small images of the type referred to above have been discovered, and where he was known and worshipped as Mahāpienne.[3] None of the representations of Gaṇeśa in Burma, however, are of interest either from the point of view of art or of iconography, being crude in execution and of the well-known Hindu types; but a most remarkable *stela* was discovered in the ruins of a Brahmanic temple at Pagan[4] which will be described below when comparing it with a Khmer and with a Cham statue, all three of which have the same unusual features.

Pushing farther eastward, the Indian travellers found the Mōn also established in south Siam on the banks of the Menam. It is not known what form of Buddhism they practised; but as the Hindu emigrants were of superior culture, the process of Indianization was more rapid than in Burma. From the sixth to the eighth centuries they exerted a strong influence on the statuary art of the Mōn; and Grousset looks upon this period as a transition stage between the Gupta art of India and the pre-Angkor art of Cambodia.[1]

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[1] According to Sir Charles Eliot, probably in the beginning of our era. *B. and B.*, vol. iii, p. 103.

[2] *B. G. in B.*, Ray, p. 9.

[3] Idem, p. 69.

[4] Idem, Pl. XXI.

In Siam, Gaṇeśa was as popular with the Buddhists as with the Brahmans. His image, however, was never allowed within the precincts of the Buddhist temples, but was tolerated within the temple grounds. Unfortunately no statue of any interest has been found in south Siam. We only know of his popularity from the many small images referred to above, which were probably copied and recopied by native artisans. Not until the Ayuthian period in central Siam is a Siamese representation of Gaṇeśa to be found which is worthy of study.

Toward the ninth century, the Mōn moved farther north and founded, in central Siam, a second state, the kingdom of Haripuñjaya. Unlike the kingdom of south Siam, they resisted the Khmer; but in the thirteenth century the Mōn were overpowered by warriors from the north, the Thaī, and became a part of the new state with its capital at Ayuthia. The early art of Ayuthia, although influenced by the Indian culture of the conquered Mōn, developed characteristics of its own, as will be seen by a very fine example of Ayuthian statuary art which was formerly in the private collection of H.R.H. Prince Damrong.[2]

Gaṇeśa is represented seated in the Mahārājalīlā pose with the right knee uplifted, while the left is bent before him on the *āsana*. The head, well placed on the shoulders, is modelled with considerable skill, and the trunk is of unusual suppleness. The eyes, as in India, are round and staring. The head is covered by a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*, tiara-shaped in front, behind which rises a spiral-shaped *uṣṇīṣa* ending in a point and somewhat resembling the spiral head-dress of a four-headed Gaṇeśa described below.[3] The body is erect and, like the Khmer statues in general, is not obese but is normally modelled. He is bare to the waist and has a serpent over his shoulder in place of the Brahmanical thread.

One of the specially interesting features of this Ayuthian bronze is the arrangement of the arms, which, as far as the author knows, is unique. From the shoulders to the elbow, there is only one arm; but at the elbow, the arm branches into two, somewhat like the images of Hindu gods in the Orissa districts of India. Two of the hands are lifted on a level with the shoulders, holding a lasso and an attribute difficult to determine. The wrist of the normal hand is posed on the knee; but the hand is raised in what may possibly be a *mudrā*. The normal right, which rests on the upraised knee, holds the broken tusk. The Ayuthian sculptor, however, was apparently not versed in Hindu iconography, for the image is possessed of both tusks; and the broken-tusk attribute is thus without *raison d'être*.

Crouching under his uplifted right leg is his *vāhana*, the rat, which we shall not come across either in Cham or in Khmer images of Gaṇeśa; and shall rarely meet with in Javanese statues.[1] Even in Indian representations where the rat, especially in the north, is seldom missing, his *vāhana* is never figured as in this Ayuthian bronze figure.

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[1] *H. de l'E.-O.*, p. 588.

[2] v. Pl. 27 (*a*) and (*b*). Kindly presented to the author by H.R.H. Prince Damrong.

[3] v. Pl. 27 (*c*).

In the Brahmanic temple at Bangkok there is a remarkable bronze statue of Gaṇeśa where he is seated in the transitional Khmer attitude with the legs superposed. Like practically all of the Khmer images, he is bare to the waist with the pleats of the *sampot* falling over the belt in front. Across the breast is the serpent Brahmanical thread. The hands do not rest on the knees as in the usual Cambodian figures of Gaṇeśa but are both slightly raised, the right holding the broken tusk as if it were a stylus; and in the left there is a leaf-book. Apparently this statue represents Gaṇeśa as a scribe; but is he to be looked upon as scribe to Vyāsa or to his father, Śiva? Either, or both, legends might have penetrated into Cambodia.

The *Mahābhārata* was known in Cambodia as early as the sixth century; but the north India recension of the epic poem with the introduction containing the legend of Gaṇeśa as amanuensis to Vyāsa could not have penetrated into Cambodia until a later date. It is interesting to note that none of the images of Gaṇeśa as scribe, known to us, are prior to the eleventh century; and that it was *in the eleventh century* that the kingdom of Dvāravatī, founded by the Indianized Mōn, was united to the Khmer empire. May it be inferred from this that the Mōn, who, with their Indian culture, were probably acquainted with the north recension of the *Mahābhārata*, introduced the legend into Cambodia?

If, on the other hand, the representations of Gaṇeśa holding the stylus were inspired by the sacred *Gāyatrī-tantra*,[2] wherein Gaṇeśa is referred to as writing down the Tantras to the dictation of his father Śiva, the legend would have penetrated into Cambodia at an earlier date. This important Śaiva *tantra* was perhaps known in Cambodia in the ninth century, when Śaivism was not only at its height but in great favour with the Khmer dynasty. During the reign of Jayavarman II, who came to the throne in A.D. 802, Tantric texts were introduced into Cambodia by Hiraṇyadāma, a Hindu Brahman priest well versed in the cult of the Śiva-*liṅga*. Unfortunately there is no document to prove the one or the other theory, or even that the legend was known in Cambodia; but as neither the Buddhist nor the Brahmanic statuary art was based on pure fantasy, it is safe to say that this unusual representation of Gaṇeśa as scribe was inspired by one of these two legends.

An old Siamese manuscript, now in the library of the École Française d'Extrême Orient at Hanoï, contains six images in outline of Gaṇeśa, of which three[3] are of special interest. They are extremely ornate and stand with the knees bent and far apart, whereas the heels almost touch each other. Two of the figures are called Vighneśvara and are of interest because one of them is *standing* on a rat and the other on a tortoise. The third Vināyaka is a curious and unique representation of which the author has been unable to find an explanation. He is called Koñcanāneśvara and has three crowned heads, and wears an ornate *sampot* and many jewels. He has six arms. The hands carry: at the right, a small image of an elephant with infinite heads; at the left, an elephant with three heads. The intermediary arms hold: right, an elephant with three heads; left, three elephants each with one head. The normal right arm balances a conch-shell, the hand posed on the knee; while the left arm points to the left with a conch-shell in the hand. The text in Siamese states that it represents Gaṇeśa engendering a male elephant with the right hand and a female elephant with the left. It undoubtedly has a symbolic meaning which unfortunately escapes us.

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[1] v. Pl. 32 (*a*).

[2] v. *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra*, trans. Avalon, note p. 5.

[3] v. Pl. 39 (*a*) and (*b*).

The cult of Śiva penetrated into Cambodia from the Funan, where Brahmanism was practised at a very early date. Śiva alone of the Trimūrti seems to have been set up for special worship, while Brahmā was apparently forgotten and Viṣṇu looked upon as an accessory deity. By the sixth century, Śaivism had found fervent royal favour which lasted until the tenth century; but in spite of the fact that sanctuaries were not only dedicated to Śiva but to his son, Gaṇeśa, no evidence of a Gaṇeśa cult has been found. On the other hand, the many small images discovered in Cambodia testify to a certain popularity.

Some of these images are Hindu in type or show Indian influence; but the Khmer representations of the Elephant-faced god have characteristics which are not found outside of Indo-China. Generally speaking, prah Kenès, as he is called in Cambodia, is never obese. The legs are neither locked nor are they, with rare exceptions, crossed in the Hindu fashion, but lie one superposed above the other (the right above the left), which attitude, according to Groslier, indicates the evolution of pre-Khmer art.

As a rule, the seated figure has only two arms with the hands posed on the knees and holding objects that may vary. The body is neither extremely erect nor 'ramassé' as in Java, but gives the impression of bending slightly forward. The trunk hangs straight and is coiled at the end; but there are examples, as will be seen below, where the end of the trunk turns outward and upward. This latter form we have already met with in Chinese Turkestan[1] and shall come across again in Bali[2] and in China.[3]

The pre-Khmer (or pre-Ankorian) images as a rule, have no head-dress, but towards the eighth century, the representations of Gaṇeśa may have an ornate *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* behind which is a spiral-shaped *uṣṇīṣa* somewhat resembling that of the Ayuthian bronze described above. Like the Cham, the Khmer images are bare to the waist and also wear an ornate necklace and serpent Brahmanical thread; but unlike the Cham representation of Gaṇeśa, he has only one belt, over which, in front, hang the pleats of the *sampot*. In the beautiful little Khmer bronze belonging to Dr. de Frey[4] the pleats almost entirely hide the legs, leaving only the knees visible.

One of the most remarkable stone images of Gaṇeśa, which was found at Tūrol Phak Kin, in Kandal, is believed to be pre-Khmer, that is, before the eighth century.[5] The figure is seated with the legs crossed at the ankles, the left over the right, which is unusual. The body is nude with slightly indicated ornaments. The right hand grasps an object which rests on the knee, while the left is raised in Hindu fashion, holding the bowl. The head is sunken between the shoulders like the Singasari image from Java and the trunk, in order to reach the bowl in the uplifted hand, makes an unusual curve which gives a strange aspect to the figure. The ears are abnormally large, the eyes are round and staring, and on the forehead is the third eye.

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[1] v. Pl. 35.

[2] v. Pl. 32 (*c*).

[3] v. Pl. 36 (*a*).

[4] v. Pl. 28 (*a*).

[5] v. Pl. 25 (*a*).

Although the statue is crude in all its details, it gives an extraordinary impression of life and force. If we compare it with a standing stone figure of Gaṇeśa,[1] also of the same pre-Ankorian period, we realize that the sculptor far surpassed his contemporary and in this case produced a masterpiece. The standing figure referred to is only of interest in that he holds in his upper hands, not the emblems of Śiva, but of Viṣṇu, the conch-shell and the disk,[2] while the normal hands hold the usual objects. A crude but later stone statue with Khmer characteristics has the third eye, and another stone image now in the Musée Guimet in Paris, believed to be of the tenth or twelfth century, has an ornate tiara and many jewels.[3] The author is of the opinion that a second pair of arms branched, originally, from the upper normal arms, somewhat as in the Ayuthian bronze figure referred to above.

A very curious representation of Gaṇeśa with four heads is in a private collection at Spean Thmar, Kendal.[4] The small bronze figure which is seated, has, as is usual in Indo-China, two arms with the hands posed on the knees, holding objects which are difficult to identify. The legs are crossed, but not in the Indian nor the Khmer fashion, since they cross at the ankles with the feet drawn up almost to the waist-line. This position of the legs may be found in Siamese bronze images; and as it is practically never met with elsewhere, the author is inclined to believe that it is Siamese rather than Khmer. The heads are disposed to face the four quarters: one head behind the normal head and one looking over each shoulder. The four heads are covered by a spiral-shaped head-dress which resembles that of the Ayuthian bronze described above. The author knows of no other image of Gaṇeśa with four heads; but in India we have met with four figures of Gaṇeśa placed back to back facing the four quarters,[5] and the above statue has undoubtedly the same symbolic meaning.

In Champa, as in Cambodia, the principal Brahmanic cult was that of Śiva, especially in his *liṅga* form. In fact, Śaivism was held in such high esteem by the Cham dynasty that it claimed descent direct from Śiva himself.[6] The seat of the cult was in the province of Quang-nam, where, between the fourth and the seventh centuries, sixty-seven sanctuaries were erected at Mi-so'n, alone.

The most ancient of these tower-shaped shrines was dedicated to Śiva in his phallic form. The huge *liṅga* mounted on a high pedestal was called 'Bhadreśvara' after the king Bhadravarman who erected it toward the fourth century A.D. In one of the Mi-so'n sanctuaries near the Śiva-*liṅga* shrine was discovered the well-known standing image of Gaṇeśa[1] which is unsurpassed in dignity and impressiveness. It is believed to be of the seventh or eighth century; but unfortunately no inscription has been found to prove this or to indicate whether Gaṇeśa was worshipped in this sanctuary as an attendent on Śiva or whether a special cult had been set up for his adoration as an independent deity. According to inscriptions such as at Po Nagar, sanctuaries were dedicated to him; but if a Gaṇeśa cult was flourishing between the seventh and eighth centuries, his popularity was nevertheless limited, if we may judge from the few statues of the Elephant-faced god that have been found in Champa.

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[1] v. Pl. 25 (*c*).

[2] In the *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra*, p. 313, there is a *dhyāna* in which he is described as holding the conch-shell and discus.

[3] v. Pl. 25 (*b*).

[4] v. Pl. 27 (*c*).

[5] v. p. 30.

[6] *H. de l'E.-O.*, Grousset, tome ii, p. 551.

The standing figure of Gaṇeśa from Mi-so'n was originally four-armed, but unfortunately two of the hands have been lost. In the normal left he holds the usual bowl; and in the normal right, when discovered, he held a leafed twig which, it seems, was missing when the image was transported to the Tourane Museum. As this attribute is found on other Cham images of Gaṇeśa, it had without doubt a symbolic meaning which is now unknown. He is represented bare to the waist, but around his neck is an ornate necklace, while across his breast is the serpent Brahmanical thread.

He wears a *sampot* with the pleated end falling in front almost to the ground, over which is a tiger-skin held in place by a triple belt of twisted cords. Above this belt is a snake girdle, and above this again is a jewelled belt.

Like all of the early images of Gaṇeśa with but few exceptions, his head is bare. His ears are large and fan-shaped while his eyes are small and true to life. As in Java, his trunk hangs straight, but turns to the left at the end in the usual gesture of taking a cake from the bowl in the left hand.

A seated figure of Gaṇeśa was also found at Mi-so'n that is of interest because of the uplifted hand which, according to Parmentier,[2] is holding a 'pinceau'. If the object is a stylus or writing-brush it would indicate that the legend of Gaṇeśa acting as scribe to Vyāsa or Śiva was known at an early date in Champa.

Like the above standing figure, he is bare to the waist, wearing the necklace, Brahmanical thread, *sampot*, tiger-skin and triple belts; but unlike the above, he has the third eye and his head is covered by a net head-dress, while on the top of his head is a flattened lotus-flower forming a rosace. We shall meet with this ornament in the Malay Archipelago[3] and shall also find it on another seated figure of Gaṇeśa in the Museum of Tourane, which is of unusual interest because, while its conception is Hindu, it has characteristics that seem to be Buddhist or at least to show Buddhist influence.

The 'borrowing', as it were, of Buddhist features for the representations of a Hindu deity is not inconceivable. Buddhism was introduced into Indo-China practically at the same time as Brahmanism and, by the fifth century, was also drawing many followers in Champa.

The above statue of Gaṇeśa, believed to be of the eighth century, was found in the province of Quang-nam, where Buddhism had established itself in the centre of the Śaiva cult and with such success that an important Buddhist monastery was founded there in the ninth century.

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[1] v. Pl. 25 (*d*).

[2] 'Les Monuments du Cirque de Mi-so'n', *B.E.F.E.-O.*, tome iv, p. 875.

[3] Pl. 30 (*c*).

As the two religions were practised side by side, it is not surprising to find a Hindu image of Gaṇeśa reflecting Buddhist iconography, as, for instance, in the position of the legs, where we find the deity in the characteristic pose of the Buddha or *padmāsana*, that is, legs locked with the soles of both feet apparent.[1] Another interesting feature of this Cham statue is a *protuberance in the middle of the forehead.*[2]

Certain esoteric Buddhist sects in India attempted to explain the *uṣṇīṣa* or protuberance on the head of the Buddha as being the seat of his divine *mind*. We have seen above[3] in the legend from the *Varāha-purāṇa* that Gaṇeśa was 'mind-born', having been produced from a brilliant flame emanating from the forehead of Śiva. From this, certain esoteric Hindu sects were led to believe that Gaṇeśa was the personification of Śiva's divine *manas* or mind. It therefore does not seem improbable that this protuberance on the forehead of Gaṇeśa was meant to symbolize the seat of the divine mind of Śiva. At any rate, this hypothesis may be accepted until a better one be found to explain the presence of this unusual feature on the Cham statue of Gaṇeśa.

The curiously shaped head of the above figure gives the impression of an elephant-face mask behind which is the normal head, especially as the ears seem to be attached to the normal head and not to the elephant face. In Indian miniatures and paintings of Gaṇeśa[4] this same idea, referred to above, is shown, since the elephant-face is painted red while the ears and neck are white or pink.

In the case of this image, the impression of a mask behind which is the normal head is even greater, for there are two foreheads, one above the other. On the lower forehead, that is, on that of the elephant-face mask, is the protuberance, while on the upper forehead, slightly farther back (which belongs to the normal head), is the third eye. The round staring eyes are on the elephant-face. The normal head is covered by a closely braided head-dress held in place by a flat tiara-shaped band and, on the top of the head, is the lotus rosace referred to above. Like most of the seated images of Gaṇeśa in Indo-China, the hands rest on the knees holding the bowl and the tusk.

There are two other representations of Gaṇeśa which also seem to indicate strong Buddhist influence. One is a small Khmer image now in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Munich. The other is the Burmese *stela* referred to above.

On the small bronze statue believed to be of the fourteenth century,[5] the same protuberance is represented on the forehead as we have seen above on the Cham image at Tourane. There is also the same impression, still more accentuated, of an elephant-face mask, behind which is the normal head. In this case he wears an ornate *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*. The trunk hangs straight and coils to the *right* at the end, which is very unusual.

The right hand holds the broken tusk with the point downward as if it were a stylus. The object in the left hand may be a book. The legs are in the Buddhist pose called *paryaṅka*: that is, with the right leg placed above the left. As a rule, in this pose, the soles of the feet should not be apparent except in the case (like the present one) when a Buddhist mark is to be shown on the sole of the foot. The circle or 'Wheel of the Law' is indicated on the sole of the right foot of this small Khmer image of the Elephant-faced god.

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[1] Also called *Vajrāsana*.

[2] v. Pl. 24 (*b*).

[3] v. p. 6.

[4] v. Pl. 11.

[5] v. Pl. 28 (*c*) and (*d*).

The figure of Gaṇeśa on the Burmese *stela* indicates still greater Buddhist influence than either the Khmer or the Cham images. Gaṇeśa, represented in high relief, is seated, with four arms. The upper hands seem to hold a conch-shell and an elephant goad. The head, with large ears, is flat and broad. The round, staring, and protruding eyes are far apart, and between them is a protuberance which cannot be taken for a third eye. The trunk is short and coils to the left. The right arm hangs straight and the hand makes the Buddhist 'earth-touching' *mudrā* called *bhūmisparśa*, which is one of the well-known attitudes of the Buddha.[1] With this *mudrā*, the legs, following the Buddhist canon, are correctly posed in the *vajrāsana*[2] attitude, that is, they are closely locked with soles of the feet apparent. The left hand is posed under the abdomen in *dhyāna-mudrā*, the palm upward, which is also a characteristic feature of this form of the Buddha. According to Ray,[3] he holds a *mātuliṅga* (citron) in the left hand; but the author believes that the incised circle indicates the navel rather than a symbol, for the figure so closely follows the Buddhist canon that, *with the hand in dhyāna-mudrā*, the deity would not be represented holding an attribute.[4]

One is at a loss to explain these three unusual representations of Gaṇeśa that have been found, each in a different country, and which, nevertheless, seem to have been evolved from the same conception, that is, giving to Gaṇeśa the qualities or rank of a Buddha. Possibly the esoteric sect in Burma which gave expression to its belief in the *stela* found at Pagan had Buddhist affiliations in Champa and Cambodia, where the other two images were conceived; but, if so, as no other figure of this type has been found, the sect was apparently unimportant and had few followers.

Gaṇeśa is figured in two bas-reliefs in Indo-China, where in both cases he is attendant deity in an assembly of gods. The first, which is in the Tourane Museum, is a crude carving without special interest. The second bas-relief, on the contrary, is a very fine representation of Śiva receiving the homage of Kṛiṣṇa on Mount Kailāśa, and is in the north gallery of Angkor Wat.[5]

On a somewhat lower level, Gaṇeśa is seated at the left of Śiva, with the legs crossed at the ankles and lying before him on the *āsana*. His right hand, which is held at the breast, seems to grasp a broken tusk; while the left, on his knee, is without an attribute. The trunk, unusually short, turns to the left, and there seems to be a protuberance between the eyes. He is accompanied by two acolytes. The one slightly behind Gaṇeśa to the right holds his axe, while to the left an acolyte carries a parasol, sign of rank, by which he is apparently designated as a deity of importance. Unfortunately there is no inscription to enlighten us in regard to this unusual group.

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[1] v. glossary.

[2] v. glossary.

[3] *B.G. of B.*, p. 61.

[4] Unless, in rare exceptions, it be the begging bowl.

[5] v. *Angkor Vat*, tome ii, part ii, 'Bas-reliefs' Pl. 423.

Stelas have been found both in Cambodia and Champa which date as far back as the sixth century; but, as a rule, they have only inscriptions surmounted by decorative motifs. In Cambodia, however, six of the *stelas* have the figure of a deity on one of the sides; and at Prasat Kéo, a *stela* dated the ninth century has a representation of Gaṇeśa in high relief.[1] He is figured with two arms and is seated with the legs superposed. Both hands, which were undoubtedly posed on his knees in the usual Khmer attitude, are unfortunately missing. He has large flapping ears; but the head has been badly mutilated and little remains to indicate the forehead, eyes, and trunk. He wears the *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* and has a jewelled girdle under the breasts, while on his arms are several bracelets. Below his abdomen a double belt holds the *sampot*. Over his head is an ornate canopy which is arched, outlining the head and shoulders, where it ends in a cornucopia-shaped motif supported by two animal-headed demons.

Inscriptions have been found in Indo-China in which Gaṇeśa is either included in a list of deities or is mentioned as accompanying Śiva. It is interesting to note that in the inscriptions both in Champa and in Cambodia, when Gaṇeśa is referred to in a group of gods such as at Hoā-que,[2] and at Mi-so'n,[3] he is called Gaṇeśa, whereas, when mentioned as attendant on Śiva, especially in his *liṅga* form, such as at Po Nagar[4] or on the *stela* at Prāsāt Trapāṅ Run,[5] he is referred to as Śrī Vināyaka. It would seem from this that under the epithet of 'Śrī Vināyaka' he was looked upon as the more important deity, especially so, since in an inscription at Mi-so'n there is mention of a *Śrī-Vināyaka-Vijaya*.[6]

In the region of Kompong Thom an inscription of the ninth century was discovered where there is reference to a donation accorded to 'Gaṇeśa of Candanagiri', that is, 'Gaṇeśa of the Sandal Mountain'. Barth identifies this mountain as the Chocung Prey[7] near which, on a hill in the vicinity of Praḥ Pāda, are ruins of a temple that is believed to have been dedicated to Gaṇeśa. This inscription is of interest because it refers to Gaṇeśa as an independent deity and locally important, and accentuates the tradition which followed him from India to Japan, of being worshipped in connexion with Mountains.

[1] *Etudes d'orientalisme: stèles historiées du Cambodge*, by Louis Finot, pl. XVIII.

[2] *Notes d'épigraphie*, by Louis Finot, pp. 240–1.

[3] Idem, p. 124.

[4] *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, H. Bergaigne, p. 269.

[5] *B.E.F.E.-O.*, lxxiii, 'Nouvelles Inscriptions du Cambodge', by Louis Finot, p. 73.

[6] *Notes d'épigraphie*, Louis Finot, p. 125.

[7] *Inscriptions du Campa*, A. Bergaigne, p. 362.

CHAPTER VI

GAṆEŚA IN JAVA, BALI, BORNEO

THERE are no ancient records either in India or Java which throw light on the early exodus of the Hindus across the seas to the Malay Archipelago, carrying with them their culture and religion and imposing the worship of their gods.

Java may have been known to the Hindus, nevertheless, at a very early date, for the Sanskrit name '*Yava-dvīpa*', found in the ancient texts of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, refers, it is believed, to the 'island of Java'.[1] The word occurs in the text of the epic poem, after the account of the abduction of Sītā by the ten-headed god Rāvaṇa, when Hanuman, chief of the monkeys, orders them to seek for the wife of Rama; and among other places he suggests that they look for her in 'Yava-dvīpa'.

It is not known at what time the Hindus actually established themselves in Java, but the Buddhist traveller Fa-hsien on his way back to China from India in the year A.D. 414 stopped at 'Yava-dvīpa' and describes the island as peopled by 'heretics and Brahmans'.[2] From this, it is evident that Brahmanism was flourishing there as early as the fifth century; but no inscription testifies to Brahmanic rites until the eighth century, when a stone inscription dated A.D. 732[3] found at Chantal gives an account of the consecration of a *liṅga*, with invocations to '*Śiva*, Brahmā, and Viṣṇu'. The fact that Śiva is mentioned first in the Trimūrti shows that he took precedence over Brahmā and testifies to his popularity in Java, even were it not plainly evident from the many sanctuaries dedicated to the Lord of the Trident which were found on the island.

It is thus not surprising that statues of Gaṇeśa, son of Śiva, should be met with in great numbers throughout the Malay Archipelago. There is, however, no evidence of an ancient Gaṇeśa cult, no temples seem to have been dedicated to him alone; but his images are sometimes to be found, as in the rock-cut temples of India, in a niche beside the Śiva sanctuaries.

In Java as in India, no transitional form of Gaṇeśa has as yet been met with unless the roughly carved elephant-headed deity discovered in west Java[4] and a small bronze image now in the British Museum[5] be accepted as primitive conceptions of the Elephant-faced god.

According to Krom,[6] the crude stone sculpture may be only an unfinished attempt to produce an image of Gaṇeśa; but the representation is so primitive even in its unfinished state that one is tempted to give it a very early date.

The figure is two-armed; the legs are missing, and there is no head-dress; but above the forehead is incised an uneven line evidently to indicate the hair. The one eye is not round and staring as in the early Indian forms but elongated, and, although traced by a simple incision, resembles a human eye. The ears are large, human in form, and lie flat against the head. The trunk is long and hangs straight, being only coiled to the left at the end. The hands, which are posed on the breast touching the trunk, are not human hands, for the fingers are all of the same length and unfortunately hold no symbols.

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[1] *B. and B.*, Sir Charles Eliot, vol. iii, p. 152, and *Buddhist Records*, Legge, p. 133.

[2] Idem, p. 133, and v. *Pour l'Histoire du Rāmāyaṇa*, by Sylvain Lévi.

[3] *A. of I. and J.*, Vogel, p. 20, and *B. and B.*, Sir Charles Eliot, vol. iii, p. 154.

[4] v. Pl. 29 (*b*).

[5] v. Pl. 29 (*a*).

[6] *Inleidung*, vol. ii, pp. 391–4.

The small bronze image in the British Museum although crude in its conception, has more detail than the stone statue. Above the forehead is a tiara-shaped crown, behind which the hair hangs straight at the back; and he wears a necklace and bracelets. The eyes are round and staring as in the Indian images, and the ears are small and human in shape. The trunk is short and curved with the end coiled underneath,[1] which is most unusual. The hands, which are more human in aspect than those of the stone image, are also posed on the breast but lower down; and the left hand may have supported the bowl. A small but later bronze figure belonging to M. Coedès[2] shows these same characteristics, that is, the trunk hanging straight while the two hands at the breast are against the trunk as if they were supporting it.

An interesting point about these two bronze images is that they have the three characteristics of practically all of the Javanese representations of Gaṇeśa: first, that, unlike the Indian conception when, if seated, the legs are wide apart, the obese torso thus touching the ground, the early Javanese Gaṇeśa sits erect with the legs bent beneath him, thus supporting the torso. Second, that the soles of the feet are touching, which is a position never found outside of the Malay Archipelago. The third characteristic of the early Javanese statues is that, with few exceptions, the trunk hangs straight and may be coiled to the left towards the end. This characteristic may also be found in Indo-China,[3] but in India it is only met with when the trunk is balancing the *modaka* in its coiled end.[4]

From these two crude images to the remarkable stone figure found on the Dieng plateau which is believed to be the most ancient representation of Gaṇeśa in Java[5] there is a wide gap. It is to be hoped that one day the transitional forms will be found which led up to this representation of Gaṇeśa which has never been surpassed in any country. At first glance, it seems to be the classic, four-armed image known to us in India; but on closer examination it is found that its conception is not purely Indian; besides which, the Indo-Javanese conceived a Gaṇeśa of great dignity, for he is seated erect with his head well placed on his shoulders. The special position of the feet, with the soles touching, gives the same impression of poise as do the locked legs of the deities of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The image from the Dieng plateau is represented as four-armed, his normal hands posed on his knees, the right holding his broken tusk, the left the bowl, while the upper arms carry the axe and rosary. His trunk hangs straight and turns to the left on a level with the bowl. The elephant-head is remarkably true to life with no attempt at giving it a human aspect like we find in later images. The body is a normal human body without being exaggerated in detail as are the Hindu images.

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[1] v. Pl. 29 (*a*).

[2] v. Pl. 29 (*c*).

[3] v. Pl. 29 (*b*).

[4] v. Pl. 14 (*c*).

[5] v. Pl. 30 (*d*).

He wears many jewels but no *mukuṭa*, nor has he the third eye often found on later statues.

In the Colonial Institute of Amsterdam there is a statue which seems to be of the same period and only differs from the above in wearing a *jaṭā-mukuṭa*. Behind his head is a nimbus. The image is on a pedestal placed in the centre of a *yoni*-shaped sacrificial stone, thus taking the place of the usual *liṅga*.

An image found on the Dieng plateau at Tjaṇḍi Pariksit is seated on a lotus throne supported by two genii. He is figured practically the same as in the above statues and his elephant-face is also extraordinarily true to life; but he differs in that he has the third eye.[1] Curiously enough, instead of a *mukuṭa* he has on the top of his head a flattened lotus flower, the petals of which are turned backward. The only other example of Gaṇeśa with a lotus head-ornament known to the author is the Cham statue in the Tourane Museum referred to above.[2] Another unusual feature of this image is that the bracelets and anklets are made of serpents.

In a niche in the ruins of a temple near Dessa Woedjel, a fine statue of Gaṇeśa was found which is now in Leyden. He is represented four-armed carrying the usual symbols and wearing a high *jaṭā-mukuṭa* on his head. The eyes, although wide apart, are human eyes; but the most interesting feature of the statue is that the body, instead of being erect in pose, as in the earlier images, is heavy and *ramassé*, a characteristic of practically all of the later seated representations of Gaṇeśa in Java. It is curious to note that the more ornate the statue, the less erect is the pose and the more sunken is the head between the shoulders.

One of the most remarkable examples of this *ramassé* type is the celebrated Tjaṇḍi Singasari statue, also now in Leyden.[3] Unlike the other images of Gaṇeśa in Java, the soles of the feet do not touch and the right knee is raised in almost the *mahārājalīlā* pose. He has four arms and holds the usual symbols. His eyes are small, round, and staring, and he wears bracelets and anklets and a snake girdle. The head falls so low on the breast that the shoulders are almost on a line with the *mukuṭa*. The striking feature of the Singasari image is the skull ornaments on the *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* and the ear-rings; while, instead of the usual *padmāsana*, he is seated on a throne ornamented with a row of skulls.

The use of the skull ornaments on the representations of Gaṇeśa is a purely Javanese conception and is practically never met with outside of the Malay Archipelago. Śiva, as has been seen above, when manifested as Bhairava, wears a garland of skulls as well as skulls in his *jaṭā-mukuṭa*. In a country where this form of the Lord of the Trident was popular, it should not be surprising to find the skull ornaments used for his son. In fact, one may even find in the *jaṭā-mukuṭa* worn by Gaṇeśa, and underneath a skull ornament, the crescent moon of Śiva; and an interesting Śaiva form of Gaṇeśa was found near Ngadirejo, in a temple dedicated to Śiva and Pārvatī, where he is represented holding a small statue of Nandi, Śiva's *vāhana*.

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[1] v. Pl. 30 (*c*).

[2] v. Pl. 24 (*b*).

[3] v. Pl. 31 (*a*).

A still more exaggerated form of the *ramassé* type of Gaṇeśa is found in the statue at Bara,[1] which is both Indo-Javanese and Indonesian[2] in style.

This stone image found near Djembe is best known as the 'Gaṇeśa of Bara'. The figure is seated; and the head which is out of all proportion with the body, almost covers the torso. The eyes are large and human in shape with heavy eyebrows. The four arms hold the usual symbols and the legs are bent underneath him with the soles of the feet touching. He wears an ornate *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* and ear-rings, bracelets, and anklets. Embroidered bands hang over the bent legs partially covering the *āsana*, which is decorated with a row of skulls in front, while at the back there is an inscription dated 1239.[3]

The unusual feature of the Bara Gaṇeśa is that while the front is of Indo-Javanese style, the back is elaborately carved in Indonesian manner, with the head of a goggle-eyed monster such as are placed in Java on either side of the entrances to the temples to guard against evil spirits.[4] These *yakṣa* guardians with tusk-like fangs are also to be met with in Indo-China.

The Bara Gaṇeśa was not found in a niche near a Śiva sanctuary. As a matter of fact, comparatively few of his representations in Java have been found in niches; and Stutterheim attributes this fact to the quantity of statues of Gaṇeśa that have been discovered which far outnumber those of any other deity, even Śiva. He is of the opinion, judging from their having been met with as a rule in isolated spots, that Gaṇeśa was revered by travellers in Java as 'Remover of Obstacles' in their perilous voyages; and this seems to be proved by the fact that his images have been found in places of danger such as steep slopes, river crossings, &c.

In India, especially in south India, it has been seen that along the highroads, and particularly where two roads crossed, there was invariably a crude image of Gaṇeśa or a formless stone (*svayambhū-mūrti*) symbolizing him, and the traveller, by making a humble offering, might thus become immune from all danger. In Kashmir his *svayambhū-mūrtis* are sometimes placed in river beds.[5]

In Java the rivers were looked upon, according to Stutterheim, as mystic boundaries fraught with danger and hazardous to cross without proper magic protection.[6] As the Bara Gaṇeśa was found at the dangerous passage of the river Brantas, it is more than probable that it was placed in this isolated spot for a special purpose. This, however, does not explain the presence of the Indonesian guardian-monster head carved at the back of the statue.

We have seen above that Gaṇeśa, both in Nepal and Tibet, was entrusted with guarding the entrance to temples and *vihāras* against evil spirits by putting obstacles in their way. May not this tradition have reached Java? The patron goddess of Nepal, Guhyeśvarī, as will be seen below, was probably known to the Javanese.

If the sculptor of the Bara Gaṇeśa conceived the idea of creating an image which, when placed at the passage of a river, could not only protect the traveller, if properly propitiated, by removing obstacles on a dangerous crossing, but guard the passage as well from evil spirits, would he not naturally seek to unite in one statue the two deities known to him that were powerful enough to fulfil the purpose? In that case, he would be likely to combine the goggle-eyed guardian of temples (who in Java held the same post as Gaṇeśa in Nepal and Tibet) with the form known to the Javanese as a propitious deity to be worshipped by travellers. It should not seem inconsistent for a Javanese sculptor to create an image which would unite the Indonesian 'Guardian against Evil Spirits' with the Indo-Javanese 'Remover of Obstacles', since the *ardhanārī* or coalesced form of Śiva and Pārvatī was well known to the Javanese. Unfortunately, no explanation which is entirely satisfactory has as yet been found for this puzzling double form.

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[1] v. Pl. 30 (*a*).

[2] *Art of I. and J.*, Vogel, p. 46.

[3] *Inleidung*, Krom, vol. i, p. 93.

[4] v. Pl. 30 (*b*) and *A. of I. and J.*, Vogel, p. 46.

[5] v. p. 22.

[6] Letter to the author.

Another image of Gaṇeśa found at the passage of a river in west Java, near Karang Kates,[1] is one of the few standing Javanese forms known to us. The statue is badly proportioned, being too short for its width. He has four arms and carries the axe and rosary in his upper hands, while in *each* of his normal hands he holds a bowl. This detail is characteristic of his Javanese standing forms and is practically never met with elsewhere. Around the pedestal is a row of skulls.

Quite different from the above is the remarkable statue of a standing Gaṇeśa, now in Leyden,[2] which gives the same impression of dignity as does the celebrated standing figure of Gaṇeśa in the Museum at Tourane in Indo-China.[3] The head is truer to nature than the usual *ramassé* type, and he wears an ornate *mukuṭa* which is decorated, as well as his ear-rings and bracelets, with skulls. A serpent across his breast replaces the Brahmanical thread. He has four arms and also carries two bowls; but the trunk is lifting a cake from the one in the left hand, following tradition. There is a nimbus as well as an aureole, and flowing scarves fall from his jewelled belt. In fact, it is the most ornate image of Gaṇeśa found in Java.

At Ardimoeljo, near Singasari, a most interesting triad was discovered,[4] which, when found, was in fragments; but it has now been restored as nearly as possible to its original form. In the centre, according to Bosch and Stein-Callenfels,[5] is the patron goddess of Nepal, Guhyeśvarī. On either side of the goddess is a small image; to the right that of Gaṇeśa in a slightly dancing pose, and to the left that of Cakracakra.[6] The inscription at the back of the triad, however, does not mention Guhyeśvarī nor the two attendants, but refers to 'Bhaṭṭārī', which, however, is only an epithet meaning 'the divine' and may therefore be applied to any great goddess such as Devī, Lakṣmī, or Sarasvatī. The goddess Devī is the female energy of Śiva and has both a mild and a fierce form. In her ferocious form she is called Durgā and may carry a sword, which attribute is never held by Lakṣmī nor Sarasvatī and *is found in the hand* of the goddess in the triad. It seems probable, therefore, that 'Bhaṭṭārī' refers to the Durgā-form of Devī, who is the same as Umā, and thus Pārvatī; hence, as will be seen from the legend below, the goddess in the triad might be Guhyeśvarī. Stein-Callenfels quotes Perquin, who claims that in the triad we are in the presence of a 'Buddhist' Durgā. One is at a loss to understand how this ferocious

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[1] v. Pl. 31 (*c*).

[2] v. Pl. 31 (*b*).

[3] v. Pl. 25 (*d*).

[4] *Oudheidkundig Verslag* (2nd ed.), Pl. 12.

[5] Idem, p. 31.

[6] Idem, Pl. 12 (*b*).

Śaiva form of Pārvatī might become 'Buddhist'; and still more so, when, after claiming that Durgā in this instance is a form of the Buddhist goddess Prajñāpāramitā, he quotes the following from Wilson in explanation: 'May that mysterious portion of Prajñā, as Guhyeśvarī . . . who, in Durgā, is manifested, &c. . . .' It seems clear, however, that 'Prajñā' does not refer here to the goddess Prajñāpāramitā but is simply the term used in *sādhanas* to indicate the mystic companion of a great god, in fact, what might be called the spiritual form of the material *śakti*. Finot is of the opinion that 'Bhaṭṭārī' refers to Durgā as the consort of Bhaṭṭārī-Guru, one of the titles of Śiva.

It nevertheless seems surprising to meet with this Nepalese goddess in Java, who although worshipped both by Brahmans and by Buddhists in Nepal was practically unknown in India. The presence of Gaṇeśa beside Guhyeśvarī also appears inexplicable without remembering the Śaiva legend, which runs as follows: Devī, wife of Śiva, was inconsolable. Her father had shown lack of respect to the Lord of the Trident, and she therefore decided to sacrifice her life to make amends. Accordingly, she ordered a funeral pyre to be prepared and when lighted she cast herself upon it. In the meantime, Śiva, hearing of his consort's wilful suicide, repaired to the place of sacrifice and seeing her on the burning pyre, gathered her up in his arms in a fit of madness and began dancing the *tāṇḍava*, threatening universal destruction; hence his name of Bhairava.[1]

According to the most popular form of this legend,[2] Śiva carried her body three times around the world, and at each place where a part of her body fell a shrine was erected. In Nepal fell the *guhya*, and the goddess Guhyeśvarī is looked upon as a personification of this 'hidden' part.

She is imaged with eight arms, and among her various symbols she carries a sword, trident, *pātra*, and bow and arrow, which are apparent in spite of the damaged state of the triad. In her upper left hand she holds a lasso, hoop-shaped. The corresponding right hand is broken and the symbol is missing. If compared with the triad in the Philadelphia University Museum,[3] their left arms and symbols seem to correspond. May not the central deity here also be Guhyeśvarī instead of 'Śrī-Lakṣmī'[4]?

The presence of Gaṇeśa by the side of the goddess finds its explanation in the fact that Guhyeṣvarī is a manifestation of Pārvatī and thus the mother of the Elephant-headed god; and it is of interest to note that the Indian tradition has been followed, for in the presence of one or both of his parents Gaṇeśa was always represented as much smaller than Śiva and Pārvatī.

Originally, he may have had four arms, but only two are left holding a bowl and his broken tusk. He is in a slightly dancing attitude which, it will be remembered, was usually the case when accompanying Śiva; and his *jaṭā-mukuṭa* and *āsana* ornamented with skulls seem also to refer to Śiva, who, in his dancing form of Bhairava, as we have said above, wears skull ornaments.

It may be only a coincidence that Gaṇeśa as represented in the triad appears to reflect the above myth. On the other hand, it is not inconceivable, since the Javanese were well versed in north-east Indian legends which have been preserved in Nepal.

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[1] *Le Népal*, Sylvain Lévi, vol. i, p. 376.

[2] *Pantheon*, Moore, p. 108.

[3] *Yakṣas*, Coomaraswamy, part ii, Pl. 8, fig. 1.

[4] v. p. 33.

Unlike Siam and Indo-China, Java produced comparatively few bronze images of Gaṇeśa, but they surpass the stone sculptures both in conception and presentation.

In the Museum für Völkerkunde in Munich there is a very fine Javanese bronze statue of a seated, four-armed Gaṇeśa.[1] The head, especially the ears and trunk, is admirably modelled. His *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* is ornamented with skulls and his *āsana* is decorated with two rows of skulls, which is unusual. In his upper right hand he holds a serpent, the body of which crosses his breast like a Brahmanical thread, while in his upper left hand he grasps a hoop-shaped garland. In each of his normal hands, posed on the knees, he holds a bowl, a feature which is rarely met with, except in standing images. The soles of his feet touch, but they are not normal feet as all the toes are of the same length. From his belt hang bands which fall over his legs, but like all the early images in Java, he is represented nude and sitting very erect.

The most beautiful of the bronze statues of Gaṇeśa is now in Leyden.[2] He is figured seated on a throne which, at the back, forms a nimbus; and above him is the royal parasol. The throne is supported by elephants, and between them is the rat, his mount, which we meet with for *the first time* in Java. As far as the author knows, this bronze image is the only Javanese representation of Gaṇeśa accompanied by his *vāhana*.

The Elephant-faced god is seated on a round cushion in the *mahārājalīlā* pose, but with this difference from the usual attitude, in that the knee is held uplifted by a scarf tied around the body from the left hip, an ancient custom of Indian ascetics and of high-caste Hindus.

The attitude with the scarf is met with in the ancient Indian school such as at Sanchi and in other Buddhist sculptures in India; and it is not unknown in Java, where, in the Buddhist bas-reliefs at Boro-Budur, there are two fine examples. One is that of the father of the prince Sudhana in indolent repose in his palace;[3] and the other is that of the Bodhisattva Siddhārtha reclining in his chariot under the royal parasol, after having met with an aged person for the first time.[4]

Although the *mahārājalīlā* pose with the scarf may be found not infrequently in stone sculptures, it is seldom met with in bronze statues. Besides this Javanese image of Gaṇeśa, there is only one other example known to the author, that of a Tibetan bronze statue of Avalokiteśvara, who is seated with the right knee uplifted and held in place by a scarf tied around the body from the left hip and knotted at the knee.[5]

It seems incongruous to find this attitude adopted for a Brahmanic god, which, in Buddhist iconography, as depicted in the Javanese Buddhist sculptures, is used for a deity of importance such as a Bodhisattva. We have seen above many examples of Gaṇeśa reflecting the glory of the Lord of the Trident; but we have not yet seen Gaṇeśa represented with Buddhist insignia of high rank such as the royal parasol, the throne supported by elephants and in princely attitude of repose.

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[1] v. Pl. 34 (*a*).

[2] v. Pl. 32 (*a*).

[3] *B. of B. A.*, A. Foucher, Pl. XXXV.

[4] Idem, Pl. XXXVI.

[5] *G. of N. B.*, Pl. XXXI, fig. *a*.

In the Museum of Mathurā there is a sculpture in stone representing Pañcika-Mahākāla in *mahārājalīlā*-pose where the scarf is drawn tight across his obese torso, which, were the god elephant-faced, might be taken for Gaṇeśa.[1] There are those who believe Mahākāla, Gaṇeśa, and Kuvera to be manifestations of the same God of Riches, and who look upon the rat of Gaṇeśa and the mongoose of Kuvera as having the same symbolic meaning. There is much to be said in favour of the theory, but to prove it would require infinite research which does not come within the scope of the present work.

Gaṇeśa in the above bronze image at Leyden is represented, as is usual in Java, with four arms, the upper hands holding a rosary and a trident-topped axe. In the normal left he has the traditional bowl of cakes; while in the normal right, between the thumb and first finger, he holds a symbol which is either a three-leafed radish or, as Juynboll believes,[2] one of his tusks 'with its roots'. If it is the tusk, it is not held in the traditional way[3] but more as if it were a stylus; which, as seen above, is a pose of the hand met with in Khmer images of Gaṇeśa[4] but unusual in a Javanese statue.

If it be accepted that the symbol is a *tusk* held as a stylus, how does Juynboll explain the presence of 'its roots'? According to all the purānic myths, the tusk was *broken off*. There is only one puranic account which might serve as a *raison d'être* for his theory of the 'tusk with its roots', where Gaṇeśa pulled out his tusk and hurled it at the Moon.[5] Is it a *radish* 'with its roots'? Kern tells us that there is a reference to Gaṇeśa holding a radish 'with its roots' in a verse of the *Bṛhat-Saṃhitā*, written by Varāha-Mihira about the end of the fifth century;[6] but as the verse has only been found in one of the texts of the *Bṛhat-Saṃhitā*, he is of the opinion that it is possibly spurious. The author is inclined to believe that the attribute carried by the Javanese bronze Gaṇeśa is a radish with *three leaves* such as is met with in Bengal,[7] where he holds it in identically the same manner, between the thumb and the index finger.

The elephant-face of the Javanese bronze image resembles none that we have as yet met with, either Hindu or Javanese. The eyes and forehead are human in aspect and the bridge of the nose is well defined, while the trunk seems to be a prolongation of the nose. This characteristic is to be found in another bronze figure as well as in a stone-carved image of Gaṇeśa discovered in Borneo. He wears a tiara-shaped crown, behind which is a complicated *mukuṭa* with tassels hanging over each ear. The trunk turns to the left and lifts a cake from the bowl in the left hand.

The small bronze figure referred to above, and of which the author has been unable to learn the provenance, is less ornate but nevertheless of great iconographical interest.[1] The deity is seated in the Javanese pose with the soles of the feet touching and has the usual four arms; but the symbols in the upper hands are difficult to make out. It may be that the upper left holds a fly-whisk. The normal left hand holds the bowl of cakes almost directly under the trunk so that it hangs *nearly straight*. The normal right hand lies on the right knee palm upward, holding the broken tusk. The ears are abnormally large and resemble small wings. As in the above bronze, he wears a tiara-shaped crown with an ornament in front as well as at the sides. The *mukuṭa* resembles that of the above bronze but is narrower.

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[1] *Art G. B. G.*, A. Foucher, tome ii, p. 525, fig. 491.

[2] *Catalogue*, p. 71.

[3] v. Pl. 3 (*a*).

[4] v. Pl. 26.

[5] v. p. 20.

[6] Chap. 58, verse 58.

[7] v. Pl. 16 (*d*).

Again, the interesting feature of this image is the head that strangely enough has an *ūrṇā* between the eyes.[2] This would indicate a Buddhist cult, and, as far as the author knows, is the only example of Gaṇeśa represented with, unquestionably, an *ūrṇā* on the forehead. The eyes are human in aspect, with well-defined eyebrows. The bridge of the nose is more apparent than in the above bronze; and the trunk, which is only formed at the end of the nose, gives the elephant face a more human aspect than we have seen on any other image of Gaṇeśa. The serpent, which is usually used as a girdle, or, hanging from the left shoulder, passes under the right arm like a Brahmanical thread, falls from each shoulder to the waist with the serpent head at the left shoulder.

If this bronze image be compared with a carved stone statue of Gaṇeśa discovered in Borneo, the similarity will be found very striking; and as they both differ in type from the usual figures of Gaṇeśa in Java, it may be inferred, until proved to the contrary, that this small bronze image of Gaṇeśa is also from Borneo.

The stone statue of Gaṇeśa[3] is seated like the above, with the soles of the feet touching, and is likewise four-armed, the upper hands holding both the rosary and axe (or elephant-goad). The normal right is broken off. The left hand is posed directly above the feet, holding the bowl underneath the trunk, which thus hangs perfectly straight, a feature which has not previously been met with in the Malay Archipelago.

The ears are abnormally large and wing-shaped, and above the forehead is a narrow crown behind which the hair is drawn into a high chignon held by a round band at the base and ornamented with a moon-crescent out of which rises a flaming triangle.

The eyes are human and the eyebrows are well defined. From the bridge of the nose, the face becomes the trunk, whereas in the bronze described above the cheeks are defined, thus giving the elephant face a more human appearance.

This stone-carved statue of Gaṇeśa was discovered in a cave at Kombeng, Borneo, which, however, was not a rock-cut temple, nor was there any evidence found of its having been used for religious rites. It is presumed that the images of Gaṇeśa, as well as those of Mahākāla, Kārttikeya, Lokeśvara, Vajrapāṇi, and others, were hidden there when their temples were destroyed by hostile invaders.

That Brahmanism existed at a very early date in Borneo is proved by a sanskrit inscription found at Kotei which is believed to be of the fifth century, where

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[1] v. Pl. 32 (*d*).

[2] v. Glossary.

[3] v. Pl. 32 (*b*).

Brahmanic rites are recorded as being officiated by Brahmanic priests. Thus it is not impossible that the statue of Gaṇeśa found in the grotto at Kombeng is one of the oldest in the Malay Archipelago.[1]

In Bali, on the contrary, no record has been found to throw light on the early adoption of Brahmanism in the island; but according to Chinese records,[2] Bali was already a religious centre in the Middle Ages resisting Moslem influence and, in fact, offering a refuge from all religious persecutions.

Before the eighth century the Balinese worshipped Brahmā and Viṣṇu and the group of five deities known to us in south India: Śiva, Durgā (Pārvatī), Viṣṇu, Sūrya, and Gaṇeśa. During the eighth and ninth centuries the Śaiva cult was especially flourishing in Bali;[3] and Śiva, accompanied by Durgā and Gaṇeśa, as well as by his mount, Nandi, the bull, was in great favour, if one judges from the number of temples dedicated to him alone. When represented in this group, he was often in *liṅga* form.

It is probable that Gaṇeśa, as one of the group of five deities, was not without his share of worshippers; and he may also have drawn a certain number of adorers when accompanying Śiva; but no evidence of an actual Gaṇeśa cult has been found which would justify the great number of his images found in Bali.

As a rule, Gaṇeśa is represented standing, and although his statues have not been found in Bali, as in Java, at river crossings or other places of danger, he may nevertheless have been looked upon as Protector against Evil Spirits. His images are often met with in niches in the *tjaṇḍis*, where his aspect is singularly more Chinese than Indian or Javanese. This is not surprising, since the Chinese were settled on the island possibly as early as the Hindus,[4] at any rate, quite early enough to stamp their influence on the art of Bali.

When standing, especially in *tjaṇḍi* niches, the Balinese Gaṇeśa is represented short and thick-set, with the head often disproportionately large and wearing a huge and complicated crown, in graduated tiers of leaf-motives with an ornament in the centre. He usually has the third eye and his normal eyes are large, often goggled, and sometimes round and staring.

He is bare to the waist, but below the jewelled girdle hang scarves draped around the hips with an ornate end falling in front to the ground. Across his breast, like a Brahmanical thread, is a serpent with the head at the left shoulder. A feature of the trunk which is only found in Bali is that toward the end it is sometimes snake-like, being *carved with the same scale motifs* as the serpent hanging from the left shoulder.[5]

Another feature of this standing form which has not as yet been met with is that Gaṇeśa has a snake and sometimes two, coiled around his ankles. We have seen that in Nepal, Gaṇeśa may hold above his head, with his upper arms, the serpent *Śeṣa*, while in Java he may have serpents for ornaments; but the symbolic meaning of the serpents coiled around his feet, which is evidently based on tradition since so often repeated, escapes, thus far, all explanation.

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[1] *A. of I. and J.*, Vogel, p. 17.

[2] *B. and B.*, Sir Charles Eliot, vol. iii, p. 183.

[3] Idem, p. 178.

[4] Idem, p. 178.

[5] v. Pl. 33 (*b*).

The seated images of the Balinese Gaṇeśa are represented as a rule with the soles of the feet touching as in Java. The stone-carved statue in a niche at the Hermitage of Yeh Poeloe is two-armed with the hands posed on the knees as in Indo-China. The body is erect, the elephant face is true to nature with normal ears. The trunk hangs straight, slightly coiled at the end.

In the village of Bretit a small stone figure of Gaṇeśa was found which is of interest because of the head-dress, for on the top of the head, behind the tiara-shaped crown, is a large flattened lotus-flower such as we have already met with in Java[1] and have found in Indo-China.[2]

In the Malay Archipelago as well as in Indo-China, it was an ancient custom to make posthumous statues of kings and queens, imaging them as gods and goddesses and usually representing them standing in groups. Stutterheim has observed the almost invariable presence of Gaṇeśa to the extreme right of the Balinese groups of deified personages, who were represented standing on lotus-flowers and wearing the same elaborate *mukuṭas* as Gaṇeśa when he is figured in *tjaṇḍi* niches or seated on a lotus throne.

Stutterheim believes that his worship was in some way drawn into the ceremonies of deifying the statues of kings and queens. As these images were made in commemoration after the death of the royal personages, it is not impossible that Gaṇeśa, who was undoubtedly worshipped during their lifetime as 'Remover of Obstacles', was placed at the right of each group in order, if properly propitiated, to remove all obstacles from their paths after death.

A statue found in Djembaran seems to show that Gaṇeśa had some such tradition in south Bali.[3] He is seated in the Javanese attitude, the right hand holding a torch, the left a bowl. The trunk is short and coiled *underneath* as in the ancient Javanese bronze now in the British Museum.[4] The head-dress is Indonesian, but the detail of special interest is that the throne is *surrounded by flames*. Beneath the feet is an inscription which is transliterated *prās* (?).

Although the statue is somewhat later than those described above, it is none the less possible that the use of the flame-motive was based on an ancient tradition executed, as far as is now known, for the first time in stone. The sculptor of gods and goddesses never added either symbols or other elements of pure fantasy until towards the seventeenth or eighteenth century; and if the symbolic meaning of some of the details is lost to us, it is none the less certain that their presence was authorized by religious canon or local legend.

Such being the case, may not the form of Gaṇeśa holding a torch and seated on a throne surrounded by flames be considered as throwing light on his role when accompanying the group of deified kings and queens? Was he looked upon as taking charge of the royal personages after death like the Shingon Fudō, who is also represented surrounded by flames? At any rate, we have come upon a conception of Gaṇeśa which has been met with in no other country.

Very few images of Gaṇeśa in bronze have been found in Bali, but one of special interest, now in the Kern Institute at Leyden,[1] was discovered in a village called Davoek Tocket and is believed to be of the eighth century.[2]

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[1] v. Pl. 30 (*c*).

[2] v. Pl. 24 (*b*).

[3] v. Pl. 33 (*a*).

[4] v. Pl. 29 (*a*).

Originally he was four-armed, but only one arm remains, the hand of which rests on the right knee and probably held the broken tusk. He is obese and nude and wears a triangular collar, the point falling between the breasts and held in place by bands passing under the arms.

As in most of the images of Gaṇeśa found in the Malay Archipelago, the head is the chief interest, and in this bronze it is especially so, since it is unlike any that we have yet met with. The trunk, which is short, *turns directly upward* and rises to a level with the *mukuṭa.*

Another feature which is rarely met with in the Malay Archipelago is the pose of the feet. He is not seated with the soles of the feet touching but is in the *Indian attitude of locked legs.*

Since neither the raised trunk nor the pose of locked legs, nor even the *mukuṭa*, indicate either Javanese or Balinese origin, it seems probable that this small bronze image of Gaṇeśa, although found in Bali, came originally from China or Indo-China.

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[1] v. Pl. 32 (*c*). Presented to the Kern Institute by Dr. Kern, assistant resident at Bali.

[2] Letter from Mr. Vogel to the author.

CHAPTER VII

GAṆEŚA IN CHINA

IT is not known at what epoch or by which route or routes the cult of Gaṇeśa was first introduced into China, and a still greater problem presents itself when attempting to account for the double form of Gaṇeśa worshipped by the Chinese which, outside of China and Japan, was *totally* unknown.

There were two channels by which his cult might have reached China. The first, and probably the earliest, was by the overland route either via Chinese Turkestan or passing through Nepal and Tibet. His worship was certainly brought to China either by Indian *paṇḍits*[1] or by Chinese Buddhist monks returning from their pilgrimages to the Buddhist shrines of India, carrying back with them the tenets of the Yogācāra or Tantric school favourable to the mystic cult of Gaṇeśa as conceived by the Chinese.

No difficulty presents itself in tracing the second route, for precise records attest to the voyages of Buddhist monks who crossed the seas from India to China, where they introduced the Tantric texts and practices as well as the Mahāyāna doctrine of the *maṇḍalas* of the Two Parts: the Vajra-dhātu and the Garbha-dhātu, mystic diagrams wherein Vināyaka had his allotted place.

Gaṇeśa was known to the Chinese as well as to the Japanese under two aspects: Vināyaka, the single form, and Kuan-shi-t'ien (Kangi-ten), the double form. The single form was similar to that found in practically all Buddhist countries, that is, elephant-faced with two arms, and was usually cross-legged. The double form, which, as we have said above, was totally unknown outside of China and Japan, was represented by two elephant-faced deities standing *vis à vis*, interlaced.

Unfortunately there are only two ancient representations of Gaṇeśa known to us in China. One is a fresco on the wall of a grotto-temple at Tun-huang, while the other is a stone bas-relief in the rock-cut temple at Kung-hsien. According to Paul Pelliot, the frescos date from the first half of the sixth century, which would make them contemporary with the stone sculptures of Kung-hsien. René Grousset traces in the frescos at Tun-huang the progressive adaptation by the Chinese of Gandharian, Gupta, and Iranian models;[2] but were these purely Hindu frescos executed by Buddhist Chinese, by Indian artists, or by both?

At this period, the finest frescos at Ajanta were being painted, and among the steady stream of Buddhist pilgrims from China to India were assuredly Chinese artists who, like the illustrious Buddhist traveller Hsüan-tsang, visited Ajanta and returned to China via Tun-huang. While at Ajanta the gradual development of mural painting may be traced which culminated in the masterpieces in Cave I, at Tun-huang, although various influences are apparent, the frescos seem to have been executed by sure and experienced hands. They were, however, apparently not creations like at Ajanta, but give the impression of having been copied from memory from Hindu paintings which unfortunately are lost to us.

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[1] v. p. 73.

[2] *H. de l'E.-O.*, tome i. p. 316.

Above and on both sides of the Buddhist statues, which are of the Wei dynasty, are the frescos which, especially in Cave N, No. 120, portray only Hindu deities: Sūrya on his horse-drawn chariot, Candra on a chariot drawn by swans, the Navagrahas in a frieze; while below is the god of Love, Kāma, beside whom, on a slightly lower level, is Gaṇeśa seated in Mahārājalīlā pose.

If we carefully study this representation of Gaṇeśa, it is surprising to find details of iconography, which apparently indicate a later period than Wei; and it seems essential that we should note these points when describing the remarkable representation of Vināyaka at Tun-huang.

We have referred above to a painting of Gaṇeśa on a panel found in Chinese Turkestan at Endere, which is said to be of the eighth century. If we compare this representation of Vināyaka with that of Tun-huang, it will be found that there is a resemblance between the two which seems inexplicable. For instance, let us study the upper part of the head of the Tun-huang Gaṇeśa and compare it with that of his representation at Endere. The head is presented three-quarters as was usual in Chinese Turkestan. The outline of the left eye, the contour of the bridge of the nose from which the trunk develops, the difficult drawing of the right eye, are so similar that one has the impression that if they were not drawn by the same hand, they were executed by artists of the same school. The left arm of Gaṇeśa at Tun-huang holds the long narrow white tusk at the breast exactly as does the Gaṇeśa at Endere the long narrow white radish. The turban head-dress seems to proclaim an Iranian influence. The turban is drawn towards the front with the knots above the forehead not only as on the Endere Gaṇeśa but also as on the painting of the well-known Iranian Vajrapāṇi, found in Chinese Turkestan, at Dandān-Üilig. The Gaṇeśa at Tun-huang does not wear the Persian tight-fitting trousers of the Vināyaka at Endere but has on the Central Asian trousers of many folds. His trunk, although turning to the right while that of the Gaṇeśa of Endere turns to the left, *has the same presentation*, that is, it hangs straight for half its length and then turns sideways and upwards parallel with itself to a level with the shoulder. In the Tun-huang Gaṇeśa, it seems about to take a cake from the uplifted right hand on a line with the shoulder. This pose of the trunk as well as that of the left hand at the breast is unusual and up to the present time has not been found elsewhere.

Although the fresco of Gaṇeśa at Tun-huang and the stone sculpture at Kung-hsien were apparently executed at the same epoch, they were assuredly not inspired from the same source.

Undoubtedly the earliest *dated* sculpture of an elephant-faced deity known to us either in China or in India is the bas-relief in the Buddhist grotto-temple of Kung-hsien[1] which, according to the inscription, was executed in A.D. 531. This Vināyaka form of Gaṇeśa is represented seated cross-legged with a lotus in his uplifted right hand and a *cintāmaṇi* in his left which is posed on his lap. According to the Chinese characters 爲神王 he is the 'Spirit King of Elephants'; and is figured in company with nine other inferior deities or 'Spirit Kings'. This same group is also represented on the base of a Buddhist monument dated A.D. 543[1] which was formerly in the possession of M. Victor Goloubew and is now in Boston.

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[1] v. *Ars Asiatica*, vol. ii, p. 15.

We have seen above that in India, Gaṇeśa often figures in groups such as the Navagrahas and the Saptamātṛkas; but in this Chinese group he is represented in the company of nine deities unknown in India *as a group*: the Spirit Kings of the Ṇāgas, of the Wind, of Pearls, of Fire, of Trees, of Mountains, of Fishes; and at one end of the group are the 'Spirit Kings' of Lions, of Birds, and of Elephants. It is perhaps only a coincidence that these last three—the lion, the bird, and the elephant—should have become important symbols in Chinese Buddhism, especially the lion as mount of Samantabhadra and the elephant as *vāhana* of the God of Wisdom, Mañjuśrī.

It seems incredible that we should find an image of the Elephant-faced god in China dated as early as A.D. 531, when in India there is no representation of Gaṇeśa which can be attributed without question to the sixth century,[2] although, as we have seen above, there is evidence of his having drawn worshippers in India at a much earlier period.

The Chinese representation of Gaṇeśa at Kung-hsien was undoubtedly made from a model brought to China either at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century, for the elephant was little known in China at that epoch and it would thus have been practically impossible for a Chinese sculptor to conceive a figure of Gaṇeśa so closely resembling the Hindu conception.

As it was not the Chinese custom to adore the images of their deities, the pilgrims coming to India from China must have been struck with the Hindu practice of worshipping the statues of their gods; and especially so, with the adoration of a Hindu god having the face of an elephant, since in China the form of the elephant was looked upon as a symbol of the conception of the Buddha.

It is not impossible, therefore, that Fa-hsien, who returned to China from India in the beginning of the fifth century, brought back an image of the elephant-faced deity as an example of the strange Indian custom. We may equally suppose that Yaśogupta, Buddhanandi, and three other Buddhist priests, who left Ceylon in A.D. 460, passing through India and, as stated in certain accounts, Tibet,[3] brought, among the images they are said to have carried with them, one of the Elephant-faced god, possibly to remove obstacles on their long and adventurous voyage.

His image might also have been carried to China by the Chinese travellers, Sung Yün and Hui-sheng, who were sent to India at the beginning of the sixth century by the empress Hou, a fervent Buddhist, with mission to bring back Buddhist texts. They returned to China with an important collection of Mahāyāna texts, nine years before the sculptures of Kung-hsien were executed, that is, in A.D. 522.

It is hardly probable at this epoch that his image should have been brought to China with the idea of establishing a Gaṇeśa cult; nor that his worship was set up in China as early as Hsüan-tsang, in the last half of the seventh century, for in the account of his travels in India, Hsüan-tsang makes no mention of Gaṇeśa, although he returned to China via Tun-huang,[1] nor did his Japanese disciple, Dōshō, establish a Gaṇeśa cult in Japan, although he introduced the doctrine of Yoga or Mystic Union.

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[1] *Ars Asiatica*, vol. ii, v. Pls. XXVII and XXXVI.

[2] That is, dated. v. p. 10 and p. 25.

[3] *Chinese Buddhism*, Edkins, p. 111, and *Wei shou on Buddhism*, James Ware, p. 146.

Toward the end of the seventh century another Chinese Buddhist monk, I-ching, returned to China after a long pilgrimage through India, but like Hsüan-tsang, he made no reference to Gaṇeśa or a Gaṇeśa cult in the records of his travels[2] although in India as well as in the Malay Archipelago, where he remained several years on his return voyage, he must have become familiar with the image of the Elephant-faced god and witnessed his popularity. It may therefore be safely inferred that the Gaṇeśa cult was not introduced into China by I-ching.

Many other Chinese monks followed the example of Hsüan-tsang by making pilgrimages to India, and returned to China for the most part ardent adherents of the Yogācāra school. Of these, however, there seems to be only one, Hsüan-chao, whose personality was strong enough to warrant even a surmise as to whether the introduction of the double form of Gaṇeśa into China, and possibly its esoteric cult, were due to him.

Hsüan-chao started from China on a pilgrimage to India about A.D. 641. Under the protection of the Chinese princess Wen-ch'eng who had become regent of Tibet after the death of the Tibetan king Srong-tsan-gam-po, he was able to pass through Tibet on his way to India where he remained for several years in the *vihāra* of Nālandā.

The form of Buddhism taught at Nālandā in the time of Hsüan-chao, outwardly Buddhist, was, in reality, saturated with Tantric thought and practices which up to the seventh century had been handed down secretly by the Buddhist priests and revealed to the public only after complicated rites of initiation.

Even before the Buddha, Tantrism or the use of mystic formulae, sorcery, and magic had been practised by the primitive peoples of north India; and according to the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, the Buddha himself was believed to have revealed the mystic *mantra*, the *Gaṇapati-hṛdaya*,[3] to his followers.

It was, however, not until the fourth century A.D. that the doctrine of the Tantrayāna with its *mantras*, *dhāraṇīs*, and *maṇḍalas* was incorporated into Buddhism and that one of the earliest Buddhist Tantras, the *Guhyasamāja*, was compiled.[4]

In the same century another mystic school was founded, the Yogācāra which consisted in the practice of profound meditation (samādhi) whereby was obtained a state of *yoga* or the ecstatic Union of the Individual with the Universal Spirit (Vairocana).

A pantheon of gods and goddesses was set up where the deities, for the most part, were personifications of abstract ideas or of philosophical conceptions deified—such as the five Dhyāni-Buddhas. Strangely enough, several Hindu gods were taken over and admitted to the Buddhist pantheon, and among these was Gaṇeśa.

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[1] *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, by the Shaman Hwin Li.

[2] *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, by I-tsing, trans. by I. Takakusu.

[3] v. p. 37.

[4] According to Przyluski, the last redaction (if not the compilation) of the *Guhyasamāja* was between the eighth and tenth centuries.

Up to the sixth century, the Yogācāra school, with its Hidden Doctrine, had remained on a fairly spiritual plane, that is to say that *yoga* or communion with Vairocana through meditation was practised principally by the intellectual. Gradually, however, the Hindu Tantras were incorporated into Buddhist literature and the distorted interpretation of *yoga* led to *śakti*-worship. The *śakti* was looked upon as the female energy of the god and was usually worshipped accompanied by the male deity. It was, in fact, a form of 'mother' cult.[1]

The germ of *Śakti*-cultus was held in the *Guhyasamāja* where, in a magic circle or *maṇḍala* the five Dhyāni-Buddhas were described as being accompanied by their *śaktis*; but up to the sixth century the *yoga* aspect of a deity had rarely been represented either in statues or in paintings. The form adopted to represent the Mystic Union was that of the deity seated with the *śakti* beside him who was usually imaged much smaller than the god. This *yoga* aspect was used not only for the important deities but also for those not included in the Mahāyāna system, such as Gaṇeśa, for, as early as the sixth century according to Coomaraswamy, he was represented seated with the *śakti* on his left knee.[2]

About eleven years before the arrival of Hsüan-chao in Tibet, the Tibetan king Srong-tsan-gam-po, who had been converted to Buddhism by his two consorts, a Nepalese princess and the Chinese princess Wen-ch'eng, sent an emissary, by name T'on-mi Sambhoṭa,[3] to India to procure Buddhist texts. It is not known what religious works he carried back with him to Tibet; but it is safe to say that beside Mahāyāna *sūtras* and Yogācāra texts he brought Tantras dealing with the *Śakti*-cultus. On the other hand, it is also probable that strong Tantric influence was transmitted to Tibet through the Himalayan passes[4] from Nepal.

Hsüan-chao, arriving at the *vihāra* of Nālandā in the middle of the seventh century with the intention of perfecting himself in Yoga, would have found a *Śakti*-cult firmly established in India; and on returning through Nepal and Tibet, he would inevitably have been struck by the difference between the Indian and the Tibetan conceptions of the doctrine of Yoga.

Little is known of the Bon-po religion which, up to the advent of the princess Wen-ch'eng, had been practised in Tibet; but it is probable, since the Tibetans were a primitive people, that the Bon-po religion was not only animist but Tantric, and that *Śakti*-worship would thus have appealed to them more directly than would the doctrines of the Yogācāra school. It is undoubtedly also for this reason that the *yab-yum*[5] form, or the gross conception of the Mystic Union, found favour in Tibet, where the deities and their *śaktis* were represented interlaced.

Since Gaṇeśa had been adopted by the Yogācārins as a Buddhist deity, his worship was introduced by them into Tibet, where his *yab-yum* form would have been the most popular. But how was the *yab-yum* form represented? As the Tibetans did not adopt the Hindu representations of the gods with their *śaktis*, it seems improbable that they would have made an exception of Gaṇeśa. It may therefore be admitted as possible that he was represented in Tibet interlaced with the *śakti*.

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[1] v. p. 20. By the recent discoveries in Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, it is proved, according to Sir John Marshall, that this cult of the 'mother' goddess was already known in India in prehistoric times.

[2] v. Pl. 3 (*a*) and p. 27.

[3] About A.D. 629.

[4] *Buddhist Esoterism*, Bhaṭṭacharyya, p. 50.

[5] Lit. 'father-mother'.

Unfortunately, we know of no representation of Gaṇeśa in the *yab-yum* attitude, which is unquestionably Tibetan; but may not the double form known in China and Japan be, in reality, the Tibetan *yab-yum* form? There are instances in Tibet where the *yum* is figured almost the size of the *yab* and is imaged facing him.[1] The difficulty of presenting an elephant-headed god in *yab-yum* with his *śakti* who had also the head of an elephant, would necessitate a somewhat different arrangement of the deities from the usual Tibetan *yab-yum* form. At any rate as the Tantric aspect of Mystic Union was unknown in China and Japan either in sculpture or paintings, the double form of Gaṇeśa was evidently due to outside influence. On the other hand, since the interlaced forms as conceived in Tibet were not adopted outside of Nepal, Mongolia, and Tibet, may we not infer that the esoteric form of Kuan-shi-t'ien found in China and Japan either came originally from these countries or was due to their influence?

Hsüan-chao, one of the most mysterious as well as one of the most learned of the Chinese pilgrims, was well qualified to have been the introducer of the mystic cult of Kuan-shi-t'ien.[2] Disciple of the monk Fa-shun, of whose esoteric system called *Fa-hsing-tsung*[3] he was the leading exponent, Hsüan-chao was well known in China as a mystic before his pilgrimage to India. At Nālandā, where he spent several years, he was initiated into the Secret Doctrine by the venerable *guru* Ratnasiṃha, and he is said to have attained the seventeen degrees of Yoga.

His reputation as a profound Tantric scholar reaching China, the emperor Kao-tsung sent an ambassador, Wang Hsüan-ts'ê, to India with mission to bring him back. Hsüan-chao, thus recalled by imperial command, returned via Nepal, where he was received in state and escorted to the Tibetan frontier.

On his passage through Tibet, he was made much of by the queen regent, who showered honours upon him and, according to I-ching, gave him many presents to take back to China. It is not improbable that, among these gifts, there should have been an image of Gaṇeśa in his *yab-yum* form with possibly the Tantric texts of ritual for his worship, since the princess Wen-ch'eng is said to have dedicated a temple to Gaṇeśa in Tibet. At any rate, it would seem impossible for a Chinese pilgrim to have introduced the *yab-yum* form of Gaṇeśa *without having passed through Nepal and Tibet.*

On his return to China,[4] Hsüan-chao proceeded to Lo-yang, where he found that the emperor Kao-tsung, under the commanding influence of his favourite concubine Wu Tsê-t'ien, had practically given over to her the reins of government and was, in reality, only emperor in name.[5] Although a weakling, Kao-tsung was none the less a fervent, as well as a learned Buddhist scholar. It is said of him that he composed a preface for one of the Buddhist translations of

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[1] *Gods of Northern Buddhism*, Pl. XLIV, fig. d.

[2] Japanese: Kangi-ten.

[3] 'School of the True Nature.'

[4] A.D. 664.

[5] v. *H. de l'E.-O.*, Grousset, tome i, p. 276, n. 4; reigned 650–683.

Hsüan-tsang;[1] but like all of the T'ang emperors, he was attracted by the occult and the supernatural and was willing to worship at any altar where there was promise of attaining his desires.[2]

Hsüan-chao was received in audience by the emperor for the first time when Kao-tsung was on his way to T'ai-shan to perform the solemn sacrifices called *fong* and *shan*.[3] Undoubtedly he was questioned by the emperor as to the mystic cults and Tantric practices which he had met with during his travels, and if it was Hsüan-chao who introduced the double form of Gaṇeśa into China, he would certainly have revealed to the emperor at this first audience, the principal elements of the mystic cult of Kuan-shi-t'ien.

Unfortunately there are no records indicating that the secret worship of the double form of Gaṇeśa was adopted at the court of Kao-tsung; but if so, the worship of Gaṇeśa as Remover of Obstacles and Bestower of Success would have appealed particularly to the empress Wu Tsê-t'ien,[4] an intriguing woman who ruthlessly swept aside all obstacles to her ambition, even her own son, Chung-tsung. And later, in 705, the cult would have found favour with the empress Wei, who, in order to usurp the imperial throne, poisoned her husband the emperor Chung-tsung.[5]

Such being the T'ang court at the end of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth, it might well have proved a fertile field for the propagation of the Tantric worship of Gaṇeśa. Hsüan-chao, however, would have had barely a year to establish the cult, for in 665 he was commanded by the emperor to proceed to Kashmir with mission to bring back to Lo-yang a Brahman alchemist, called Lokāyata, said to possess the Elixir of Life. He was obliged to interrupt his revelation of the doctrine of *yoga* to the venerable monks of the Ching-ai-ssü and thus was unable to translate the sanskrit Buddhist texts which they had begged him to render into Chinese for their use. He, however, left his sanskrit books in the temple and departed for Kashmir accompanied by Shih-pien, a Buddhist monk well versed in the use of magic prayers or *vidyā-mantras*. Hsüan-chao was never to return to China, for he died in India on his way to Kashmir.

If there is no proof that the *yoga* form of Gaṇeśa and his mystic cult were known in China in the seventh century, there are Chinese texts to show that in the second half of the eighth century he was worshipped in his double form; and if the introduction of the ritual for the worship of Kuan-shi-t'ien is not to be attributed to Hsüan-chao, it was probably brought to China, or at least translated for the first time, by a celebrated Indian *paṇḍit* Śubhākara-siṃha.

Śubhākara-siṃha[6] was the son of a king of Orissa, one of the Tantric centres of India. At the death of the king, Śubhākara reigned for several years and then abdicated in favour of his brother, preferring a life of contemplation. He was initiated into the Secret Doctrine by the celebrated *guru* Dharmagupta, who counselled him to go to China to reveal the tenets of the Yogācāra school.

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[1] *H. de l'E.-O.*, tome i, p. 294.

[2] *R.E.*, Yi-tsing, trad. Chavannes, Introduction, p. xv.

[3] A.D. 665.

[4] A.D. 684–705.

[5] A.D. 710.

[6] A.D. 637–735.

Unfortunately, Śubhākara left no accounts of his travels as did Hsüan-tsang and I-ching; but there are records which note that he left India for China about A.D. 715 carrying with him many Tantric texts and the *Mahā-Vairocana-sūtra.* On account of the troubled state of central Asia, the only safe way of travel was by sea, and he probably embarked for China from the port of Palur near the Black Pagoda, a celebrated land-mark for navigators along the east coast of India.

Śubhākara arrived in China in 716 and proceeded to the Chinese capital of Ch'ang-an, where he was received at court with many honours by the greatest of T'ang emperors, Hsüan-tsung. In spite of his advanced age of eighty, his activity was remarkable, not only as a propagandist, but as a translator; and among his most important translations into Chinese was said to be the *Mahā-Vairocana-sūtra.*[1]

Strangely enough, one of the last translations made by Śubhākara when nearing the end of his life[2] was a ritual for the worship of Kuan-shi-t'ien.[3] Was this Tantric text among the works that he had brought with him from India, or was it from the archives of one of the *vihāras* at Ch'ang-an, or found among the sanskrit books left by Hsüan-chao in the Ching-ai-ssü temple, at Lo-yang? No records solve these questions nor why Śubhākara, with so many important Buddhist works still untranslated, should have spent the short time left him for productive activity in translating this seemingly unimportant ritual. Was the translation made by imperial command? Even if so, the only logical reason for translating the liturgic text for the worship of Kuan-shi-t'ien into Chinese would seem to have been that the double form of Gaṇeśa was already known in China and that there was need of a ritual in order definitely to establish the cult.

At any rate, we know that towards the end of the eighth century the esoteric cult of Kuan-shi-t'ien was already being practised in China, for it is recorded in a religious work written by the Chinese monk Chung-shë about A.D. 774[4] that Han-kuang, also a Buddhist monk, transmitted to the author by word of mouth a minute description of how the double form of Gaṇeśa should be represented and the benefits to be derived therefrom by worshipping him when accompanied by the prescribed rites and ceremonies.

About this time, that is to say, in the second half of the eighth century, lived the most remarkable of all the Chinese mystics, Hui-kuō.[5] At the age of seven, he had already begun his religious studies under the guidance of the learned Sinhalese *paṇḍit* Amoghavajra, who taught him the use of *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs*; and was initiated by him into the doctrine of *yoga*, mastering, before he was thirty, the mystic Maṇḍala of the Two Parts in which, as we have stated above, Gaṇeśa figures in the assemblies of deities. It is said of Hui-kuō that he not only studied every esoteric form of Buddhist doctrine that reached China but mastered it with perfect understanding. May it not be inferred from this, that the esoteric cult of Kuan-shi-t'ien was not unknown to him? At any rate, according to tradition, his illustrious disciple,

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[1] Gaṇeśa was looked upon a century later in Japan as a manifestation of Vairocana; v. p. 84.

[2] Died in A.D. 735 and was buried at Lung men.

[3] Taisho 1270.

[4] Taisho 1274, called *Kangi Sōshin Bināyaka ten gyōzō hon giki*; Japanese name, Kaihitsu.

[5] Japanese: Kei-kwa; A.D. 746–805.

Kōbō Daishi,[1] introduced the cult of Kuan-shi-t'ien (Kangi-ten) into Japan, incorporating it in the Hidden Doctrine of the Shingon sect which he founded on his return to Japan from China.[2]

Unfortunately no Chinese image of the double form of Gaṇeśa is known to us, and there is thus no material proof of his having been worshipped in China. From Chinese and Japanese texts,[3] however, we learn that his secret cult was practised in China as late as the eleventh century, for the emperor Chen Tsung issued an edict in A.D. 1017[4] prohibiting the inclusion in the Tripiṭaka of the '*sūtra* in four volumes' on the worship of Gaṇeśa in his double form of Kuan-shi-t'ien; and forbade the translation into Chinese of all similar texts. The emperor very likely prohibited, at the same time, the making of images of Kuan-shi-t'ien, and this is undoubtedly the reason why no representations of the double form have been found in China.

There is therefore a wide gap between the Vināyaka form found in the rock-cut temple of Kung-hsien executed in the first half of the sixth century, and the Vināyaka form which, towards the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century, appeared in China in the mystic diagrams of the Maṇḍala of the Two Parts, that is, the Vajra-dhātu and the Garbha-dhātu.

The esoteric cult of Vairocana as taught by Amoghavajra in China in the eighth century, which later had an influence on the worship of Gaṇeśa in Japan, was founded on the doctrine of this double *maṇḍala* which had both an exoteric and an esoteric aspect—the two sides of Absolute Reality.

According to the exoteric explanation of the diagrams, the Garbha-dhātu represented the material, the phenomenal world, and the Vajra-dhātu, the spiritual, the noumenal world; and although they were apparently separate, they were in reality One and the Same or the Dharma-dhātu, that is, the Universe, the Cosmic world.

According to the esoteric doctrine, Vairocana as represented in the Vajra-dhātu diagram was the soul of the Universe while his manifestation in the world of phenomena or Vajrasattva, as figured in the centre of the Garbha-dhātu, was the embryo of the Universe. It was taught that the Two Parts of the Cosmos were symbolized by these two mystic diagrams, the hidden meaning of which was only to be revealed after the disciple had received the *abhiṣeka* or 'baptism' of initiation.

The *maṇḍala* of the Garbha-dhātu was probably introduced into China by Śubhākara-siṃha. At any rate, the earliest known diagram of the *maṇḍala* is attributed to the learned *paṇḍit*. In the earliest conception of the Garbha-dhātu diagram, the deities were not figured but were indicated by the inscription of their names in the enclosures. It is not known what Buddhist texts were used by Śubhākara to construct the diagram, but since the name that he inscribed in the centre of the eight-petalled lotus is Vairocana (in reality Vajrasattva, according to esoteric teachings) it is safe to say that it was inspired by texts bearing on the esoteric cult of the deity.

The diagram underwent several changes during the lifetime of Śubhākara-siṃha.

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[1] Japanese: Ku-kai.

[2] A.D. 806.

[3] v. new edition of *Tripiṭaka*, published by Takakusu, nos. 1266–75 and *J. B.*, Sir Charles Eliot, p. 139.

[4] Nanjio, no. 1661; v. *J. B.*, Sir Charles Eliot, p. 139.

More enclosures were added to its original form and the number of names of deities was augmented; but although the name of Iśāna (Śiva) is found in each of the transformations of the *maṇḍala*, in none of the diagrams as conceived by Śubhākara is to be found the name of Vināyaka. On the other hand, in the outer enclosures of the most ancient diagrams of the Garbha-dhātu in Japan, of which one, according to tradition, is the original and the other a copy of the original diagram brought from China by Kōbō Daishi,[1] the image of Vināyaka is shown third from that of Iśāna in the north exterior enclosure.[2]

Toganoō tells us in his *Mandara no Kenkyu* that the Garbha-dhātu diagram conceived by Śubhākara was copied by the Corean priest Chisho Daiji while staying in the T'ang capital towards the end of the eighth century; and furthermore, that Chisho became the *guru* of Hui-kuō and gave him Buddhist texts to read that had been translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Śubhākara-siṃha.[3] If the Corean priest showed him, at the same time, the original, or his copy of the original, diagram of the Garbha-dhātu drawn by Śubhākara, Hui-kuō would have first seen the *maṇḍala* without the image of Vināyaka. The question thus arises as to when the representation of Vināyaka was first incorporated in the outer assembly of deities in the Garbha-dhātu *maṇḍala*.

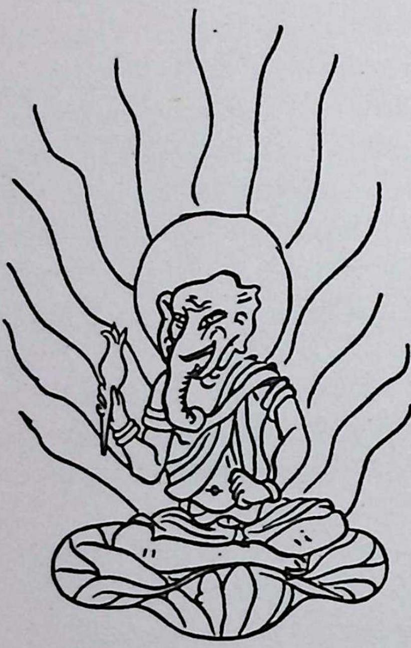

FIG. 4. Vināyaka in the Vajra-dhātu.

The Vajra-dhātu *maṇḍala*, we are told, was constructed according to the *Vajra-śekhara-yoga* and was painted by the Indian saint Nāgabodhi, who transmitted his copy to his disciple Amoghavajra when he returned to China in A.D. 746. The diagram contained nine assemblies of deities arranged in three rows of three. The central *pariṣad* or assembly was made up of five circles each containing five gods; and the whole *pariṣad* was framed by an enclosure containing minor deities among whom were five different forms of Gaṇeśa.

According to Toganoō, however, the diagram of the Vajra-dhātu was not constructed in India but was conceived by Amoghavajra from the Buddhist esoteric texts that he had brought back to China on his return from India, where he is said to have learned the method of drawing the *maṇḍalas* from the saint Nāgabodhi himself.

At any rate, there is little doubt that the *maṇḍala* of the Vajradhātu, as well as that of the Garbha-dhātu, took on definite form in China; and that the image of Vināyaka under the direction of Amoghavajra was inserted for the first time in the mystic diagram of the Garbha-dhātu. In fact, direct Indian influence is apparent in the outer enclosure, where, besides Vināyaka, there are the Hindu gods Iśāna, Indra, Yama, Varuṇa, Vaiśravaṇa, and the *grahas* or planets and *rākṣasas*.

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[1] v. p. 78.

[2] Called *Saige-in* (to the left of the diagram).

[3] v. *Mandara*, Toganoō, p. 48.

Another question arises as to why there were five images of Gaṇeśa in the Vajra-dhātu while there was only one in the Garbha-dhātu.

The *raison d'être* of four of the five forms of Gaṇeśa in the Vajra-dhātu may possibly be his reputation as a powerful protecting deity if properly propitiated. We have seen above that in India, as well as in Tibet, he was placed over the entrances to temples and monasteries for that purpose. Amoghavajra was evidently aware of this, for in one of his Commentaries (Taisho No. 1003) he states that Gaṇeśa was 'placed over the four entrances', that is, protecting the four sides, undoubtedly, of a *vihāra*. This custom, probably based on a *sūtra* which, unfortunately, is unknown to us, seems to explain the presence of Gaṇeśa in the centre or vulnerable point of each side of the outer enclosure (*Saige-in*) framing the central *pariṣad*. He thus protected the four quarters against evil spirits, following the directions which Amoghavajra had undoubtedly brought from India.

The fifth image of Gaṇeśa in the Vajra-dhātu, called Vināyaka, is, as it were, *hors série*. He is represented in the usual Indian form of the 'Remover of Obstacles' except that he carries the radish instead of the broken tusk.[1] His position in the *maṇḍala* was below the Gaṇeśa guarding the north[2] side of the *pariṣad*, while the Vināyaka of the Garbha-dhātu is also on the north[3] side of the outer enclosure and is placed in the suite of Iśāna (Śiva).

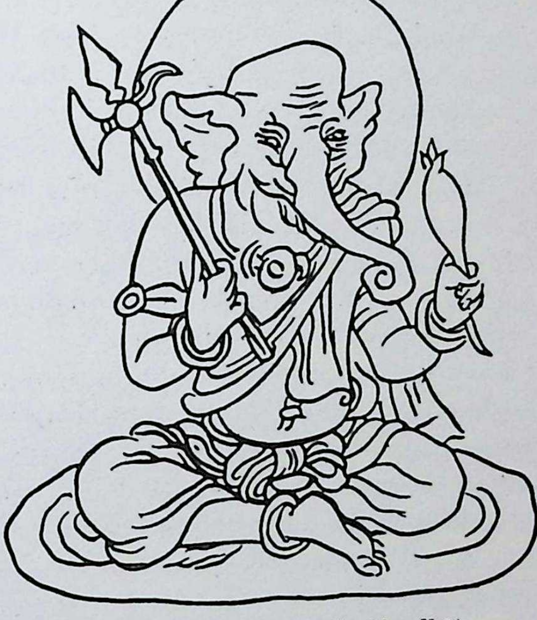

FIG. 5. Vināyaka in the Garbha-dhātu.

As an explanation of the presence of the fifth Gaṇeśa in the Vajra-dhātu, it may be suggested that when Śubhākara's diagram of the Garbha-dhātu in which the deities were not depicted was adopted by Amoghavajra and his disciple, Hui-kuō, to form, with the Vajra-dhātu, the Maṇḍala of the Two Parts, they inserted in place of the names, the figures of the deities, probably copying them from the Vajra-dhātu. Amoghavajra would certainly have remarked that there was no image of Gaṇeśa in the Garbha-dhātu diagram of Śubhākara. As we have seen above, he believed in the efficacy of charms and *mantras* and was probably not insensible to the Indian tradition in regard to Gaṇeśa; and, as a wise precaution, he might have inserted a figure of the 'Remover of Obstacles' in *both* diagrams to ensure them against all 'obstacles' that would hamper the secret rituals of the Maṇḍala of the Two Parts.

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[1] v. p. 79.

[2] That is, the right side. The points of the compass differ in the two *maṇḍalas*.

[3] That is, the left side.

CHAPTER VIII

GAṆEŚA IN JAPAN

THE 'Remover of Obstacles' was unknown in Japan up to the ninth century, when the Buddhist monk, Kōbō Daishi,[1] who was sojourning in the Kamadera temple at Takaishi, came upon a roll of manuscripts that proved to be a Chinese translation of the *Mahā-Vairocana-sūtra*,[2] the Tantric doctrine of which, a few years later, was to influence the rites and ceremonies of a Gaṇeśa cult.

As Kōbō Daishi was unable to grasp the hidden meaning of the *sūtra*, and as no one in Japan was able to reveal it to him, he begged permission of the Emperor to be allowed to go to China. Accordingly, in company with the Buddhist monk, Dengyō Daishi, he joined the suite of the ambassador to the T'ang court, and arriving in China,[3] he wandered from temple to temple in search of a Buddhist scholar versed in the Hidden Doctrine. In the Tsing-long-ssü,[4] he found the great *paṇḍit* Hui-kuō,[5] head of the Shēn-yen[6] sect, who greeted him with the words: 'I knew that you would come to me and have been waiting for you. Prepare to receive the Doctrine of Mia-kuō.'[7]

According to Shingon tradition, Hui-kuō revealed the Hidden Doctrine to Kōbō Daishi after having given him the *abhiṣeka* or 'baptism' of initiation; and ordering a copy of the Maṇḍala of the Two Parts to be painted by the celebrated Chinese painter Li-chēn, he transmitted the two diagrams to his illustrious disciple. The enclosures in the diagrams as well as the images of the deities were outlined in gold on a black background, and the two *maṇḍalas*, called the 'Takao Maṇḍala', are now in the Jingō-ji at Takaosan. The 'Tōji Maṇḍala' in the Kongō-in at Tōji is in colours and is believed to have been painted by Kōbō Daishi himself, in 821, from the 'Takao Maṇḍala'.

In spite of the various copies of the Maṇḍala of the Two Parts, the representations of the deities have preserved their Indian aspect; and the forms of the four images of Gaṇeśa as Guardian of the four sides of the central assembly or *pariṣad* (joshin-e) of the Vajra-dhātu may be found in India. The guardian of the west,[8] called Vajra-vāsin, carried a bow and arrow; the guardian of the east, Vajra-cinna, held a parasol; Vajra-bhakṣaṇa, guardian of the south, carried a garland (*mālā*) of flowers, while Vajra-mukha, guardian of the north, grasped a sword. One of the guardians may have the head of a wild boar possibly in order to frighten away evil spirits, for, as will be seen below, Gaṇeśa was believed to have the faculty of taking on any form he desired.

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[1] Ku-kai.

[2] Translated, according to Japanese tradition, by Śubhākarasiṃha (Zemmui).

[3] A.D. 804.

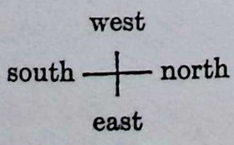
[4] Japanese: *Seiryu-ji.*

[5] Japanese: *Kai-kwa.*

[6] Japanese: *Shingon* (True Word).

[7] Hidden Doctrine. Japanese: *mikkyō.*

[8] The points of the compass in the Vajra-dhātu are:



None of the representations of Gaṇeśa in the Vajra-dhātu, however, were adopted popularly in Japan except the fifth form or Vināyaka, who was to be found directly below Vajra-mukha, the guardian of the north side of the *maṇḍala*. As the image of Vināyaka in the Garbha-dhātu was also placed on the north side of the diagram,[1] it seems to prove, especially as they both carry the same attribute, the radish,[2] that they were meant to represent the same aspect of the deity, the 'Remover of Obstacles'.

We have seen above that the radish as an attribute of Gaṇeśa was unknown in Ceylon as well as in India, except in the north-east part bordering on Tibet and Nepal, where, on the contrary, it was found almost without exception in the place of the broken tusk.[3] It seems evident, therefore, that the original diagram was conceived and constructed *in north-east India*; but by whom? According to Japanese tradition, the *śramaṇa* Nāgabodhi who had taught Amoghavajra on the latter's return to India the method of constructing the *maṇḍalas*, had received instruction in turn from the saint Nāgārjuna who lived in the middle of the seventh century. Although a native of southern India, 'Tantric' Nāgārjuna, it is recorded, 'went to the Himālayas, where he began to study, teach, and propagate the Mahāyāna'.[4] He was one of the earliest writers on Tantric Buddhism; and, according to B. Bhattacharyya, was responsible for two *sādhanas* in the *Sādhanamālā* of which one, relating to the worship of Ekajaṭā, he is said to have 'rescued from the country of Bhoṭa, which is identified with Tibet'.[5] It would seem from this that Nāgārjuna reached at least the borders of Tibet, in which case he must have been familiar with the form of Gaṇeśa holding the radish; and if the diagram of the Vajra-dhātu transmitted to Amoghavajra by Nāgabodhi was constructed by Nāgārjuna, his *guru*, the presence in the *maṇḍala* of the form of Gaṇeśa with the radish is apparently explained. At any rate, the representation of Gaṇeśa holding the radish seems to have been handed down without change in its original form to Amoghavajra, who carried it to China, whence it was introduced into Japan by Kōbō Daishi.

Japanese Buddhism wove a legend around this form which might well be called a 'composite' legend, for it was made up of elements that we have met with before in other Asiatic countries, but in legends in no way concerned with Gaṇeśa.[6] The myth runs as follows: there was once a king by the name of Mararuratsu (?) who ate only meat and *radishes*; but when he had eaten all the animals in the kingdom, he was given the flesh of his dead subjects to eat. When there were no more dead in the kingdom, his frightened officials killed his subjects to furnish him with food; but the people revolted and the king, who, in reality, was a wicked demon, took fright and assuming the form of a Vināyaka, disappeared in the heavens. It will be seen below how Vināyaka was subjugated and became a 'Protector of Buddhism'.

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[1] The points of the compass of the Garbha-dhātu are:

east
north —+— south
west

[2] v. p. 77.

[3] v. p. 38.

[4] *The Shingon School of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, B. L. Suzuki, *Eastern Buddhism*, vol. iii, 1924.

[5] *Buddhist Esoterism*, p. 68.

[6] v. the beginning of the Pali *jātaka* no. 537; *Jātaka-māla*, no. 31; *Bhadra-Kalpāvadāna*, no. 34; *Cinq cents contes et apologues*, by Ed. Chavannes, nos. 41 and 133; *The Story of Kalmāṣapada*, &c., by Watanabe in the *Journ. Pali Text Soc.* 1909, pp. 236–310.

In time, the 'Remover of Obstacles', particularly venerated, according to Sir Charles Eliot, as forming part of a *maṇḍala*, gained a certain popularity in Japan. Statues were made of him copied from his Vināyaka form in the *maṇḍalas*, and temples such as Hozan-ji at Ikoma were dedicated to him. As was inevitable, his representations later took on other aspects, and we find him in his classic Indian form holding his broken tusk and with one tusk missing. His images were given a more human aspect in Japan than in India, and he was sometimes depicted with a laughing expression.[1] He was often represented standing, with from two to six arms. In his Vajra-vināyaka form he carried a *vajra*, while in his form of Kaku-zen-chō he was conceived with three heads each having three eyes, and in his four arms he held a sword, a radish, a round object (*modaka* ?), and a sceptre. He was supposed to be seated on a mountain and was referred to as 'King of Elephants'.

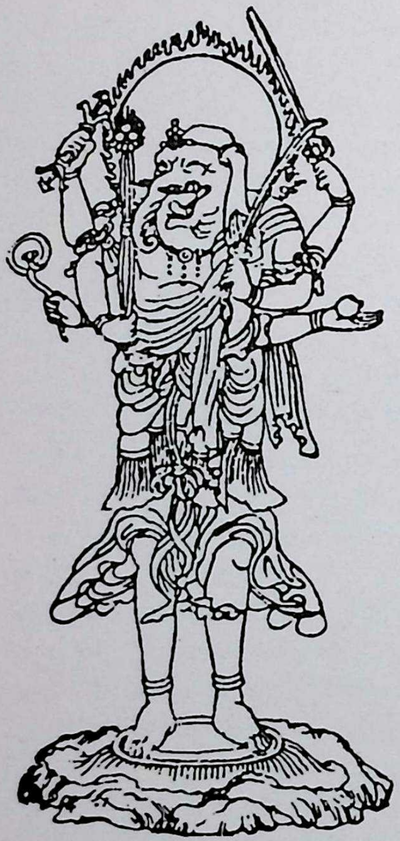

Fig. 6. Vajra-vināyaka.

It is not probable that any of these forms, however, were known until long after Kōbō Daishi's time. At any rate, the Vināyaka form remained one of the minor deities, and there is no record of a Gaṇeśa cult other than that of Kangi-ten, said to have been brought to Japan, as we have mentioned above, by Kōbō Daishi.

The cult of Kangi-ten, which was secret and esoteric, was based on the doctrine of Yoga; and the 'Divine Couple' was looked upon by the Shingon sect as representing the Union of the Soul of the Universe (Vairocana) with the Primordial Essence (the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara in feminine form).

In order to understand the strange cult that developed around the double form of Gaṇeśa, we must return to China and trace the religious movement before Kōbō Daishi's sojourn in that country.

The tenets of the Hidden Doctrine (*mikkyō*) were brought to China from India in 720 by the Indian *śramaṇa* Vajrabodhi[2] and his Sinhalese disciple, Amoghavajra.[3] They introduced not only the use of *mantras, dhāraṇīs, maṇḍalas,* and other Tantric practices, but the cult of the Ādi-Buddha, Mahā-Vairocana, which was founded on the doctrine of Yoga conceived as the Union of the Individual with the Universal Spirit.

After the death of Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra returned to Ceylon and India in search of a copy of the *Mahā-Vairocana-sūtra*, their manuscript of which had been lost at sea in a violent storm on their voyage to China. We have seen above that he met the saint Nāgabodhi in south India and studied with him the mystic diagram of the Vajra-dhātu. On returning to China,[1] he brought back with him not only the *Maṇḍala*, many Tantric texts, and a copy of the *Mahā-Vairocana-sūtra*, but, according to Japanese tradition, *a statue of the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara.*[2]

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[1] v. Pl. 37.

[2] Japanese *Kongō-chi*

[3] Japanese *Fukū-sanzō*.

The doctrine of Yoga which had permeated into China even before Hsüan-tsang's time and, by his disciple Dōshō, had penetrated into Japan, was still more firmly established in China by Amoghavajra and his Chinese disciple Hui-kuō, both of whom claimed supernatural powers. When the *abhiṣeka* of Kōbō Daishi and his initiation by Hui-kuō took place, a miracle, according to Shēn-yen (Shingon) tradition, was performed: Kōbō Daishi became One, for an instant, with the Ādi-Buddha Vairocana.[3]

The Shingon sect in Japan had also its tradition of a similar miracle. After his return to Japan,[4] Kōbō Daishi was commanded to present himself at court and disclose before the Emperor, the court officials, and the heads of all the Buddhist schools the tenets of the Shingon sect which he had founded. While expounding the doctrine of *mikkyō*, Kōbō Daishi took on, before the astonished assembly, the aspect, for an instant, of the Ādi-Buddha, who thus manifested himself in the form of Vairocana.[5]

After this miracle, the dogma of the Union of the Individual with the Universal Spirit was firmly incorporated in the tenets of the Shingon sect; and the secret cult of Kangi-ten, *the material demonstration of the dogma*, was adopted by the sect as the ritual for his worship which had been brought from China by Kōbō Daishi.[6] There are no records, however, to show whether Kōbō Daishi actually carried back with him an image of the Kangi-ten along with the Tantric texts; but if not, since among the manuscripts brought by him to Japan was the work compiled by the Chinese monk Chung-shë,[7] it is safe to say that the Shingon Buddhists faithfully followed its detailed prescriptions for making a statue of Kangi-ten. That is, the image should be executed in metal and never higher than 22 inches. The two standing figures should be represented facing each other with the elephant-head posed on the left shoulder of the opposite figure and the arms of each encircling the other. They should wear long robes falling to the feet.

There were certain characteristics of the Japanese images of Kangi-ten which may not have figured in the work of Chung-shë. For example, in the earliest representations, the female figure usually has the mouth open while the male deity has the mouth closed. This detail is apparently of mystic significance in Japan, since the Ni-ō, guarding the outer gates of Buddhist temples, have the same characteristic.[8] In fact, there is a similarity so marked between the Ni-ō and the Kangi-ten that the question arises as to whether there is an affinity between them. Both are guardians of temples. Like the Kangi-ten, the Ni-ō, although a dual form, is to be conceived as One; and they also form a part of the *Maṇḍala* of the Two Parts in their manifestations of Aizen, symbolizing the material world or *Garbha*, and Fudō, standing for the noumenal world or *Vajra*. As guardians of the temple entrances, they are called Misshaku and Kongō (*Vajra*). Misshaku was represented with the mouth open, undoubtedly to emit the sound of his *vīja—a*; while Kongō was figured with the mouth closed, very likely to pronounce the mystic syllable of his *vīja—hum.*[1] We find these two deities as far west as Chinese Turkestan guarding the entrance to a grotto-temple at Bäzäklik;[2] and again in India, this time *with elephants' heads*, standing on either side of a colossal statue of Gaṇeśa at Unakoti hill in the Tripura state.[3] In both cases the guardians have the above feature which is, as we have said, characteristic of the Ni-ō as well as of the Kangi-ten.

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[1] A.D. 746.

[2] Japanese: *Ju-ichi-men Kannon.* The statue is said to have been brought to Japan in the first half of the eighth century by a Chinese priest, Kanshin Daishi, who presented it to the Mikado Shōmu. It later came into the possession of the Daimiō Awoyama and was enshrined in the Baisō-in, the temple being the burial-place of the family at Akasaka.

[3] *Development of Japanese Buddhism*, by A. Lloyd, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Japan.

[4] A.D. 806.

[5] *Shingon School of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, by B. L. Suzuki.

[6] Taisho, no. 1274, *Sōshin Bināyaka ten gyōzō hon giki.*

[7] Japanese: *Kaishitsu.* v. p. 74.

[8] v. *G. of N. B.*, p. 170.

The female Vināyaka may wear a small crown[4] and the male may balance a *cintāmaṇi* on his head.[5] According to the directions of the Chinese monk Han-kuang, the female form should have the shoulders covered while the male might have one, or both, bare. Sir Charles Eliot mentions a form of Kangi-ten that was shown to him in Japan where the two deities are back to back.[6] In late representations they were not always figured facing each other but sometimes side by side[7] and both have a laughing expression.

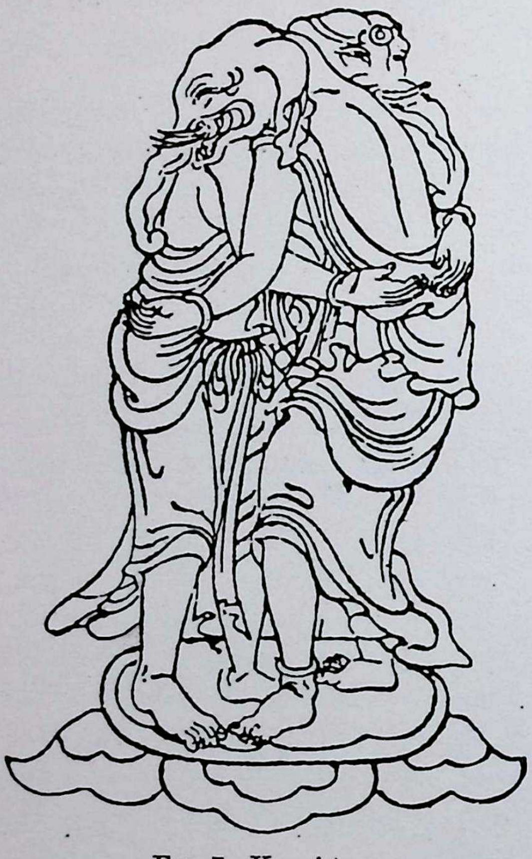

Fig. 7. Kangi-ten.

In Japan the image of Kangi-ten had three different interpretations: one, exoteric; the second might be termed 'intermediary', while the third was esoteric. There was also a fourth form known only to those who had undergone the *abhiṣeka* of initiation. Under each of these aspects, the Kangi-ten was worshipped in secret and never shown to the lay devotees. When not exposed for worship in a private chapel of a temple, they were always hidden either under a *liṅga*-shaped cover[8] or, if they were in a *zuchi*,[9] the doors were closed. The Chinese ritual,[10] which is followed even to the present day, consisted in constructing 'an altar for celestial beings' for the purpose of 'dispersing evil spirits and gaining the desired results of prayer'.[1] The rules for prayer were transmitted by Kōbō Daishi himself; but we do not know whether he worshipped Gaṇeśa or not, or if so, whether in the single or the double form. The ceremony began with the offering of *sake* and of the fruit of the pomegranate, accompanied by the burning of incense, while chanting a Tantric *stotra* addressed to the deity. The statue was immersed in temple water or in consecrated oil. Curiously enough, a statue of Kannon usually accompanied the Kangi-ten shrine.

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[1] The *myōkyōjō chinshō*.

[2] v. *Chotscho*, von Le Coq, Pl. 32.

[3] v. *Archaeological Survey of India*, 1921–22, Pl. XXX (*a*).

[4] v. Pl. 38 (*b*).

[5] v. Pl. 38 (*c*).

[6] *Japanese Buddhism*, p. 356.

[7] v. Pl. 37.

[8] v. Pl. 38 (*a*).

[9] v. Pl. 38 (*b*).

[10] v. p. 81.

The 'intermediary' form was looked upon as representing Vināyaka and the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara (Kannon);[2] and the coupling of a demi-god with the greatest of Bodhisattvas seems at first incomprehensible. Undoubtedly the earliest interpretation of the double form in China was that of Vināyaka and his *śakti*, especially if the form came originally from Tibet; and the identification of Avalokiteśvara with the *śakti* of Vināyaka might be plausibly explained if there were documentary proof that the Sinhalese form of the Bodhisattva, Loka-nātha, was known as early as Amoghavajra's time.

In the Sinhalese work on iconography, the *Śariputra*, where the deities are minutely described, the Sinhalese form of Avalokiteśvara called 'Loka-nātha' is shown as having eight aspects or manifestations. The first four are: Brahmā-nātha, Viṣṇu-nātha, Śiva-nātha, *Gaurī-nātha*.[3]

It will be remembered that Gaurī (Pārvatī) was the *śakti par excellence* of Śiva. The Bodhisattva, in his fourth and feminine aspect, thus became in his manifestation of Gaurī the *śakti* of Śiva. De La Vallée Poussin states[4] that the personification of the Cosmic Female Energy (Gaurī) in India shows that the Chinese transformation of Avalokiteśvara into a female deity (Kwan-yin) had probably already been effected in India.

The eighth aspect of Loka-nātha mentioned in the *Śariputra* was Gaṇa-nātha,[5] the description of whom practically tallies with that of the Indian god Gaṇeśa. Thus the Bodhisattva was identified with Vināyaka also in the Sinhalese work which was not of great antiquity, but which is believed to have been compiled from and based on ancient tradition. At any rate, in the *Kāraṇḍa-vyūha*, with which Amoghavajra was undoubtedly familiar, we find the Bodhisattva identifying himself with Gaṇeśa when he declares that he will not enter into *Śūnyatā* until all human beings are saved; and that, in order to teach the Dharma to all creatures, he will take on the aspects of Brahmā, of Viṣṇu, of Śiva, of Gaṇeśa. . . .[6]

In Buddhist texts such as the *Vināyaka-sūtra*,[7] for instance, Gaṇeśa was associated with the Bodhisattva, as in the following legend: Maheśvara (Śiva) had 3,000 children of whom 1,000 were benevolent and were commanded by his son, Senāyaka, while the rest were demons under the command of Vināyaka. At that time there was a wicked king by the name of Kangi who had plunged his kingdom into a state of misery such that his ministers and people revolted and addressed their prayers to the Eleven-headed Kannon to save them. The Bodhisattva accordingly took on the aspect of a beautiful woman; and appearing before the king, excited his passion. She, however, resisted his advances, telling him that she was a fervent Buddhist, and that if he desired her, he must be converted to Buddhism. The Vināyaka king forthwith consented to follow the precepts of the Buddha and promised to protect the Dharma, whereupon the Eleven-headed Kannon became the wife of the Vināyaka king, Kangi. There is a variation in the legend where Senāyaka, mentioned above as son of Śiva, but being in reality, Kannon, takes on a feminine form and becomes the wife of her brother, Vināyaka, in order to turn him from his evil ways. The interpretation of Kangi-ten as representing Kannon and Vināyaka may possibly be based on one of these two legends.

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[1] Letter from the Rev. M. Morito, Shingon priest of the Monastery of Kōya-san, Japan.

[2] v. the *Shi-bu-hō* and the *Dōsen Kokatsu*.

[3] 'Mahāyānism in Ceylon', by Paranavitane, *Ceylon Journal of Science*, vol. ii, part 1, Dec. 1928.

[4] v. 'Avalokiteśvara', *Hastings' Encycl. R. E.*

[5] In the *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra* we find 'Gaṇa-nātha' mentioned as one of the twelve manifestations of Gaṇeśa, p. 25.

[6] v. *Buddhist Esoterism*, by B. Bhattacharyya, p. 28–29.

[7] v. *Tripiṭaka*, vol. xxi, no. 1270.

In the third and esoteric aspect of Kangi-ten, the 'Divine Couple' was worshipped exclusively by the Shingon priests who were fully initiated in the *mikkyō*; and in this form Kangi-ten was looked upon as personifying Mahā-Vairocana (Universal Spirit) and the Eleven-headed Kannon (Cosmic Female Energy). There are no records to show whether this esoteric interpretation of the Kangi-ten came originally from China or was evolved in Japan by the Shingon sect. We only know, as we have said above, that Kōbō Daishi introduced the double form into Japan and brought the rituals for their worship from China.

If, as is believed, the statue of the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, now in the Baisō temple at Akasaka, was brought originally from Ceylon by Amoghavajra,[1] it is probable that the learned Sinhalese *paṇḍit* was responsible for the Chinese feminine form of the Bodhisattva worshipped under the name of Kwan-yin. The doctrine of Yoga being at the height of its popularity in China towards the end of the eighth century, it should not be surprising to find the double form of Gaṇeśa taking on a mystic and esoteric significance; and it is conceivable that the Kuan-shi-t'ien should have been looked upon in China at that epoch as personifying the Gaurī aspect of Avalokiteśvara (Cosmic Śakti) and the Vairocana aspect of the Ādi-Buddha (Soul of the Universe).

Although the worship of Kangi-ten was not held publicly in the temples, the double form of Gaṇeśa, in time, became known to the uninitiated as well as to the Shingon monks and priests; but in the Hidden Doctrine of Shingon, a mystic form of Kangi-ten was worshipped which was only revealed to the few who had attained the highest degree of Yoga, that is, profound meditation or *samādhi*. The esoteric aspect was to be conceived as representing the fusion of the double form into one, in other words, as symbolizing supreme Yoga; and for that reason was to be visualized as having one body with four arms and *four legs*.[2]

Thus we find in Japan another esoteric form of Gaṇeśa, and an aspect of Kangi-ten still more mysterious; but here the questions arise as to where and by whom this form was conceived. Strangely enough, while in Japan no image of this

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[1] v. *Mahāyānism in Ceylon*, by Paranavitane, p. 42.

[2] Through the kindness of the Rev. M. Morito of the Shinton Monastery of Kōya-san.

mikkyō conception of Gaṇeśa is known, in China there *seems* to be a representation of this mystic form in a fresco which is in the Buddhist grotto temple of Tun-huang.[1]

At first glance the fresco is apparently that of the usual Vināyaka, seated and having two arms and two legs. He is represented bare to the waist and wearing very full trousers gathered into a narrow belt. He is in the *mahārājalīlā* position,[2] with the left knee lifted while the right leg is bent parallel with the body.

Has this figure of Gaṇeśa at Tun-huang four legs?

If we closely follow the folds of the loose trousers, the form of a second pair of legs is seemingly indicated. The right knee, which would be directly under the normal knee, is somewhat hidden by the arm of the guardian deity below; but we can easily follow the lower line of the leg bent inward, with apparently a fold of the trousers lying on the support of the deity. *This detail will be found again at Endere.* The line of the left knee is visible directly *behind* the foot of the uplifted normal leg; and the presence of this second leg seems to be further indicated if we follow the folds of the trousers drawn towards the left side. The two feet of the second pair of legs would be naturally placed behind the normal right foot and thus hidden underneath the folds of the voluminous trousers.

Again, in the Buddhist temple of Endere in Chinese Turkestan where a painted panel of Gaṇeśa of the eighth century was found by Sir Aurel Stein,[3] there is apparently represented the same mystic aspect of the Elephant-faced god that is still worshipped in Japan. The deity is imaged with one head, four arms and, according to Sir Aurel Stein, with two legs and 'seated on a cushion'.

But is the Gaṇeśa of Endere seated on a cushion?

In the frescos of the eighth century in Chinese Turkestan it was not unusual to represent the deities seated on a cushion-*āsana* instead of on a lotus flower, especially at Dandan Üilig, where, for example, a painted panel of Vajrapāṇi so represented was found by Sir Aurel Stein. Were it not for the four arms, the deity might be mistaken for a Sassanian cavalier with his black beard, tiara-shaped turban, tight-fitting tunic, and high boots; and he is seated on the typical cushion found in the frescos of Dandan Üilig which is high and stiff with rounded corners.[4]

The painted panel of Gaṇeśa of Endere, on the contrary, is Indian in style with no trace of Persian influence. The 'cushion' on which, according to Sir Aurel Stein, he is seated, is lower than, and quite different from, the cushion-*āsana* of the deities at Dandan Üilig.

On close and careful study of the original painting now in the British Museum, it becomes apparent that the 'cushion', in reality, is a second pair of legs. Under the right normal leg, for instance, the bend in the knee of the lower right leg is as clearly indicated as is the bend in the upper and normal knee. If we follow the lower line of the same leg, it is apparent that it bends inward and that the foot is behind the point of the tiger-skin, the *curve alone of the dhotī indicating its presence.* The lower legs are covered with looser trousers than the normal pair, for underneath the line of the second pair of legs are folds such as we have seen above in the frescos of Tun-huang.

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[1] v. Pl. 36 (*a*).

[2] v. Glossary.

[3] v. Pl. 35 and p. 41.

[4] v. *Ancient Khotan*, Pl. LXI.

A detail which seems to indicate without question a second pair of legs is that there is a second *dhotī*, red in colour, which separates the normal legs from the lower pair and falls in a point under the tiger-skin. The artist has thus avoided the difficulty of representing two pairs of feet, one above the other, by placing the lower pair, as at Tun-huang, under the folds of the trousers, and at Endere, under the points of the tiger-skin and red *dhotī*.

Does the fresco at Tun-huang, as well as the painted panel of Endere, represent the double mystic aspect of Gaṇeśa known in Japan as Kangi-ten ?

If they are to be looked upon as representing the *yoga*, that is, the fusion of two deities, their conception might be traced to one of the Tantric centres of India where representations of coalesced Hindu gods may be found among the most ancient Indian sculptures. The Hindu conception, however, as we have seen above, was expressed somewhat differently. The *ardhanārī* or coalesced form of Śiva and Pārvatī, for example, was also represented by one body but with two legs and two arms, the right side being Śiva and the left side, Pārvatī.[1] We have seen above that the fusion of four Vināyakas into one deity was referred to in the *Smṛti* of Yājñavalkya, but there is no indication as to how the god was to be represented. On the other hand, in a Tantric ritual translated from the Sanskrit by Fa-shien of the Sung dynasty,[2] there is the description of a Vināyaka with *six* legs, but it is unfortunately not explained as to whether or not, this form represented the fusion of three deities. The author, however, understands that there existed such a conception in Nepal.

Even if the two paintings are not to be traced to India, may not the Endere aspect of Gaṇeśa with four legs be due to Tibetan influence ? In the eighth century the Tibetan armies crossed the borders of China, overran Nepal and Mongolia, and established themselves in Chinese Turkestan, where their influence was predominant until the middle of the ninth century. Undoubtedly they brought with them the distorted form of Buddhism as taught by the *guru* Padmasambhava and carried with them the images of their deities with many arms and legs. It should, therefore, not seem strange to find a representation of Gaṇeśa with four legs in Chinese Turkestan or, as a matter of fact, farther east, since in Shingon *mikkyō*, founded by the Chinese Buddhist sect, Shēn-yen, there *still remain vestiges of Tibetan influence* in their rites and ceremonies.[3]

In fact, these and other aspects of Gaṇeśa, as we have seen above, are still shrouded in mystery, and more than one hypothesis advanced by the author is open to discussion. No divinity, either Hindu or Buddhist, has had so varied a 'career'. From a humble village deity worshipped in connexion with the harvest, he rose to unbelievable heights, surpassing the Trimūrti: Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva; in fact, equal to Brahman himself. Accompanying the traders as 'Remover of Obstacles' on their adventurous voyages across the seas, we find him adopted by Hindu and Buddhist alike, and represented in the pose of a Buddha.

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[1] v. Pl. 6 (*a*).

[2] Nanjio, no. 1059. By the kindness of M. Demiéville.

[3] v. *Shingon School of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, B. L. Suzuki.

His cult persisted and penetrated into China, where it took on a mystic and esoteric form unknown in India. The Yogācāra caught him in its meshes and wove around him secret rites and ceremonies; and although he was only a demi-god, the Elephant-faced deity became as widely known as the great Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara with whom he was finally identified.

There are those who look upon Gaṇeśa as a *fétiche,* as a 'grotesque invention'. The author, in reply, can but quote the gentle reproach of Parmentier when reviewing a work on eastern art: 'That we are incapable of judging the conception of an eastern mind, seems proved when a writer looks upon the representation of the Elephant-faced god with amusement rather than with comprehension. . . . The heavy, corpulent body required to support the massive head of an elephant, may, on the contrary, awaken an impression of real majesty'. If there is an element in the representation of Gaṇeśa which, to western eyes, seems amusing, it is 'involuntary on the part of the sculptor, and takes away nothing from the special idealism of the figure of the Elephant-faced Deity'.

VIGHNĀRĀJA KṢAMASVETI

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GLOSSARY

Abhaya-mudrā. Gesture usually of the right hand, indicating protection. The hand is raised with the palm turned outward and all the fingers extended upward.

Āsana. Seat of a god or of a group of gods. The *padmāsana* is the lotus support on which all the important Buddhist deities are represented seated or standing. The *vajrāsana* or 'diamond throne' was the support of the Buddha when meditating under the *bodhi*-tree.

Asuras. Demons, enemies of the *dēvas*.

Batasa. v. *Modaka*.

Cintāmaṇi. Magic gem which, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, has an esoteric significance. It is represented round, except on top where it is slightly pointed.

Dhāraṇi. Magical prayer or merely a suite of mystic syllables supposed to be efficacious in bringing about the desires of the worshipper.

Dhotī. Piece of stuff wound around the hips and legs and, with the exception of India, held at the waist by a belt. In India it may fall to the knees or to the ankles, but the *sampot* in Indo-China and the *sarong* in the Malay Archipelago usually fall to the ankles.

Dhyāna. Meditation. The *dhyāna-mudrā* is represented by the hands lying on the lap with the right above the left. The palms should be turned upward with all the fingers extended.

Grahas. Planets. Group of nine planets called the Navagrahas.

Kalaśa. Water-vessel.

Kapāla. Bowl made out of a human skull. It is used in Tantric ceremonies.

Karaṇḍa-mukuṭa. v. *Mukuṭa*.

Kīriṭa-mukuṭa. v. *Mukuṭa*.

Liṅga. Phallic symbol.

Mahārājalīlā. Attitude called 'royal ease'. The deity is seated with the right knee lifted while the left lies on the *āsana* parallel with the body.

Manas. The mind when considered as a reasoning factor.

Maṇḍala. Magic circle or diagram in which deities and symbols are placed, the whole representing a hidden meaning.

Mantra. Short magic formula.

Modaka. Round cake made of rice and sugar. It is somewhat larger than the *batasas* which are presented in a bowl, while the *modaka*, being a symbol as well as an attribute, is presented by itself.

Mukuṭa. Stiff head-dress almost entirely covering the hair worn by both Hindu and Buddhist deities in India and Indo-China. The *mukuṭa* may be *karaṇḍa*, *kiriṭa*, or *jaṭā*. The *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* is bowl-shaped and not so high as the other two. It may be terraced and, in later examples, highly ornate. The *kiriṭa-mukuṭa* is conical-shaped and covered with jewelled disks and bands, while the *jaṭā-mukuṭa*, which is still higher, is the most complicated of the three. It is made up of five braids of matted hair (*jaṭās*) tied into knots, coiled into loops, and ornamented with crescent moons, cobras, &c.

Padmāsana. v. *Āsana*.

Tarjani-mudrā. Threatening gesture of the hand. All the fingers are closed except the index which is extended.

Pūjā. Hindu religious ceremony accompanied by the offering of flowers and fruits and the aspersion of the image of the deity.

Purāṇa. Religious poem wherein are found the genealogies of the Hindu gods.

Sādhana. Magic formula for the invocation of a deity.

Śākta. Śākta sect which worships Durgā as the *Śakti* of Śiva.

Śakti. Every important deity has a divine *śakti* looked upon as the personification of his energy.

Śramaṇa. Learned religious teacher.

Stotra. Religious hymn to a deity.

Tilaka. Mark on the forehead indicating the religious sect to which the worshipper belongs.

Ūrṇā. Small, round protuberance on the forehead above the bridge of the nose. A Buddhist mark indicating spiritual insight.

Vāhana. Mount of a deity on which he may be seated or standing, or the *vahana* may be represented beside him.

Vajra. Literally 'diamond' but usually translated 'thunderbolt', or that which destroys but is itself indestructible. It is represented by a short bar with prongs at each end which touch at the tips, and is held by Hindu and Buddhist deities.

Vajrāsana. v. *Āsana*.

Vihāra. Buddhist monastery.

Vīja. Literally 'seed'. It is the germ of a *mantra* and every important deity has his *vīja* which is used when he is invoked.

Vitarka-mudrā. Gesture of argument. The hand is raised with the palm turned outward and all the fingers extended except the thumb and index which touch at the tips.

Zuchi. Small Japanese shrine for a deity having doors by which it may be closed.

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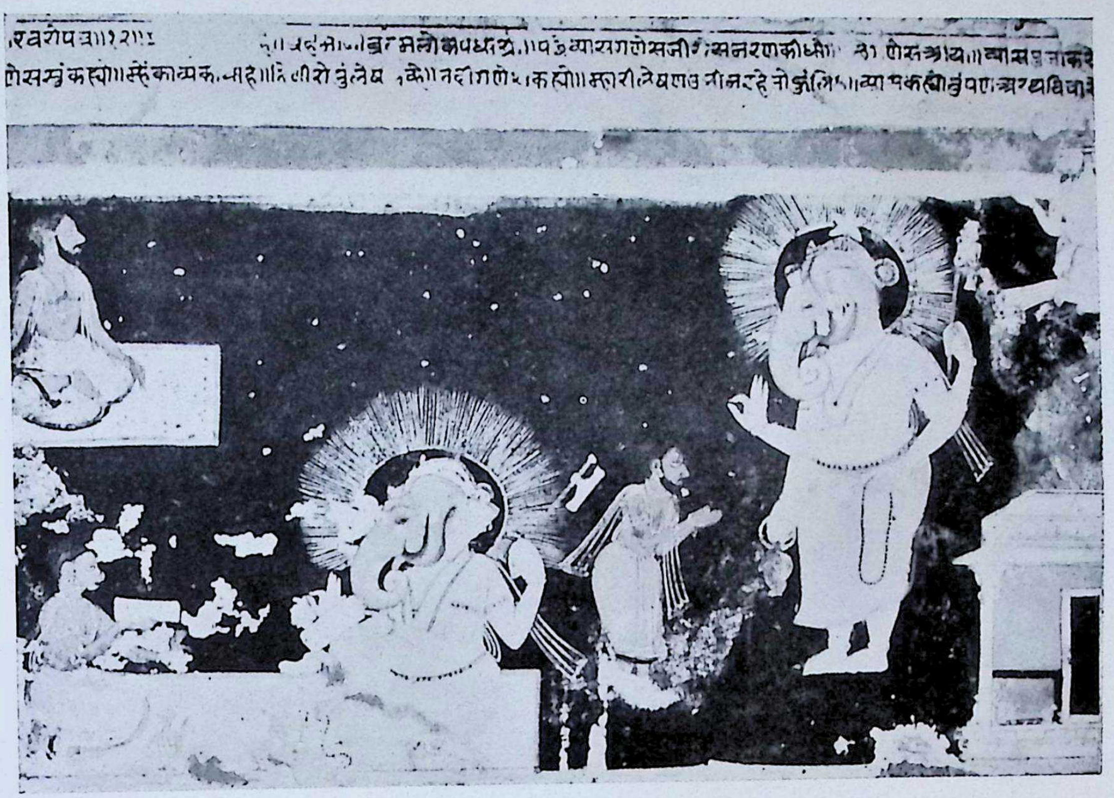
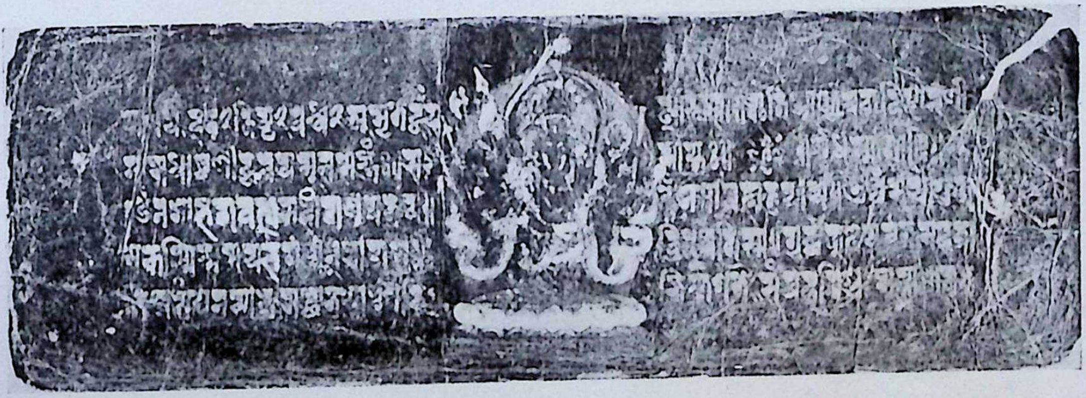
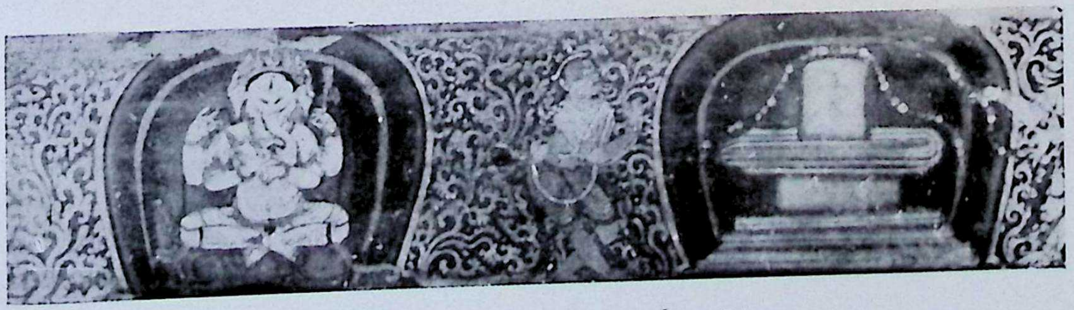


a. Vyāsa dictating the *Mahābhārata* to Ganeśa

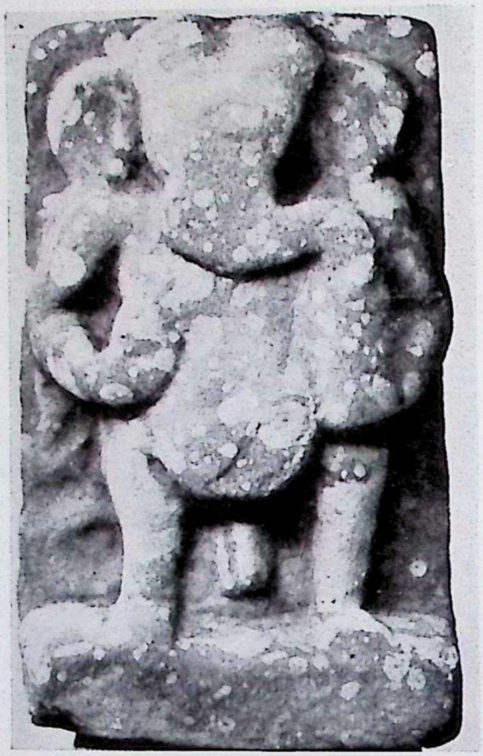


b. Gaṇapati-Heramba with formula for his invocation

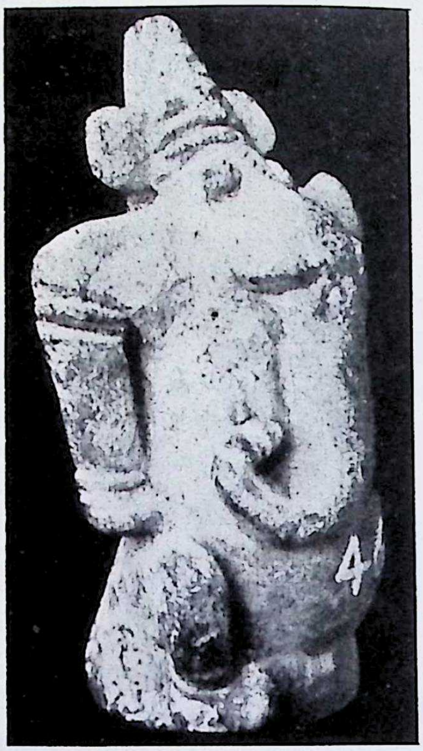


c. Gaṇeśa as scribe and the Śiva-*liṅga*

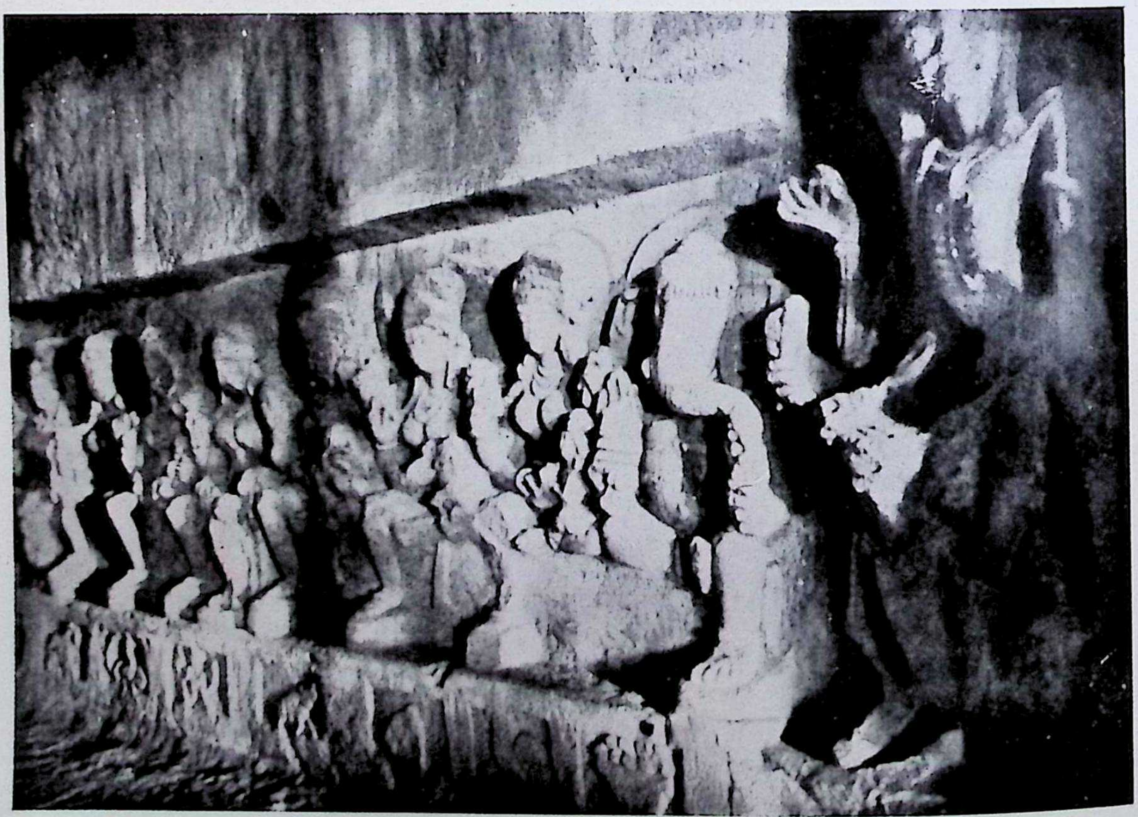
PLATE 2



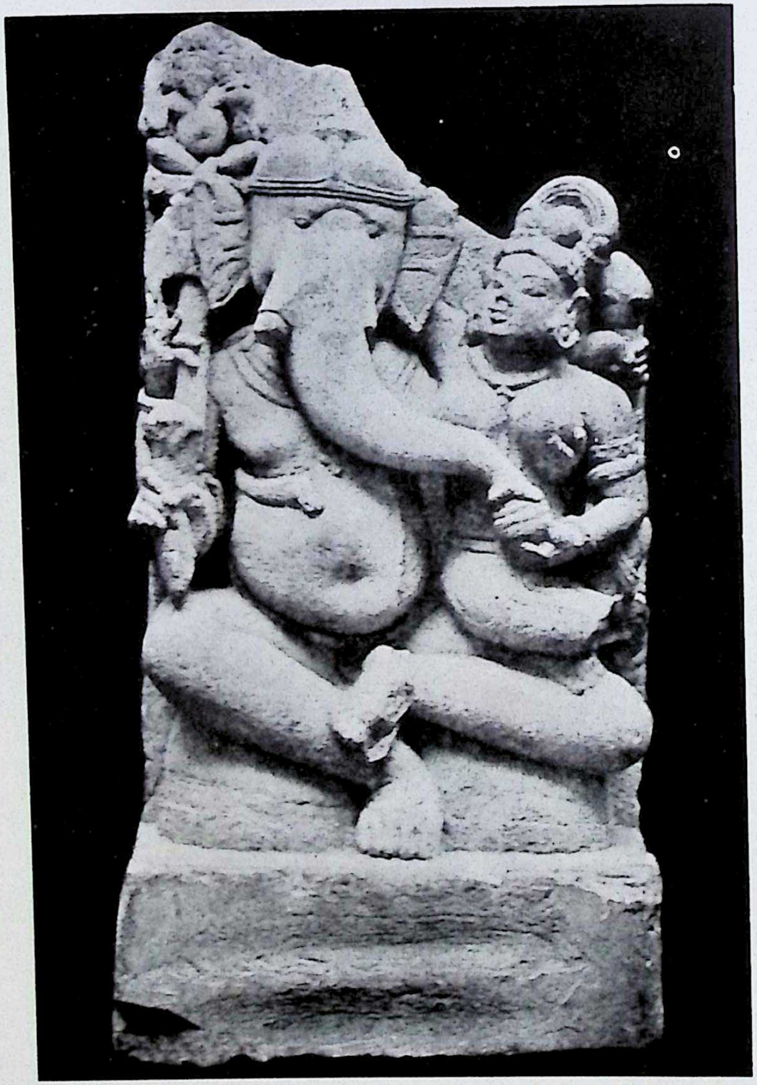
a. Bas-relief from Mathurā



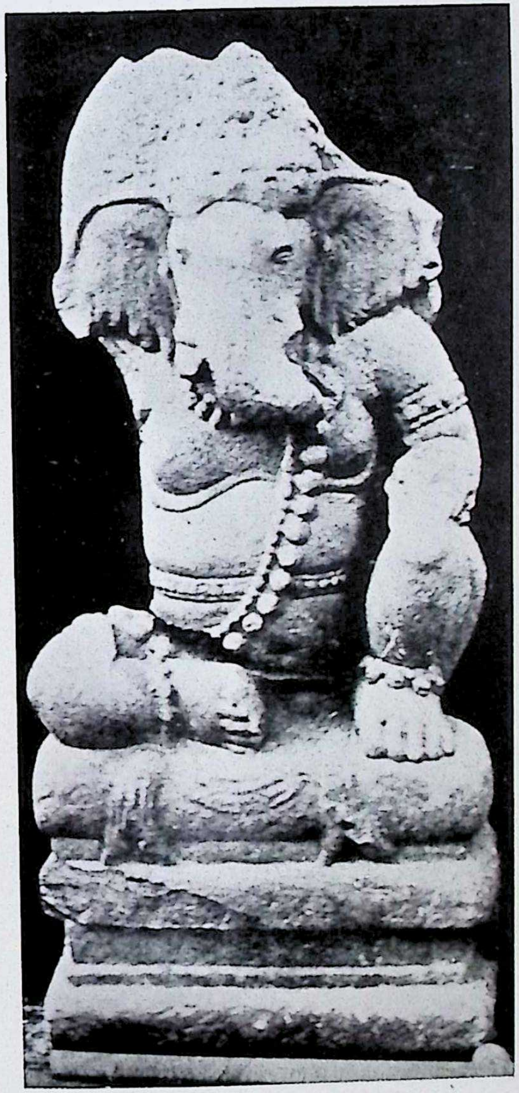
b. Sinhalese image



c. Gaṇeśa with the Seven Divine Mothers at Ellora

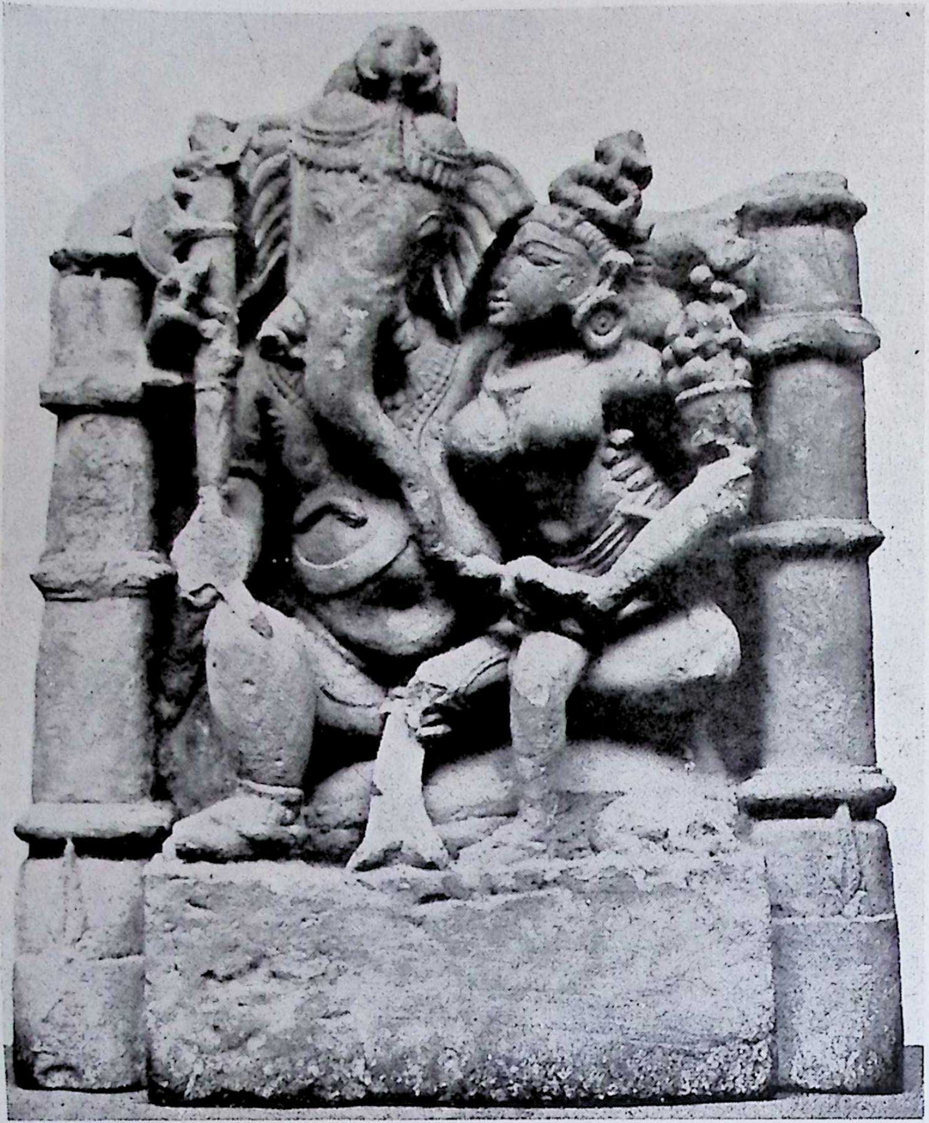


a. Gaṇeśa and *śakti* from Bhumāra

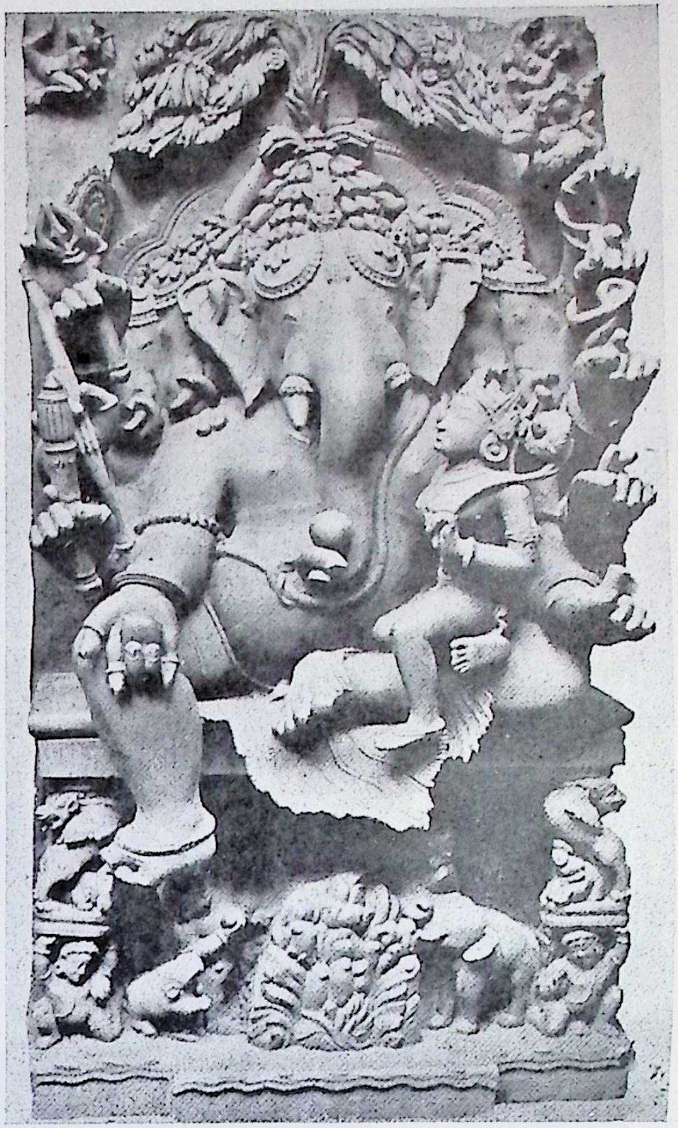


b. Gaṇeśa 'with the bells'

PLATE 4

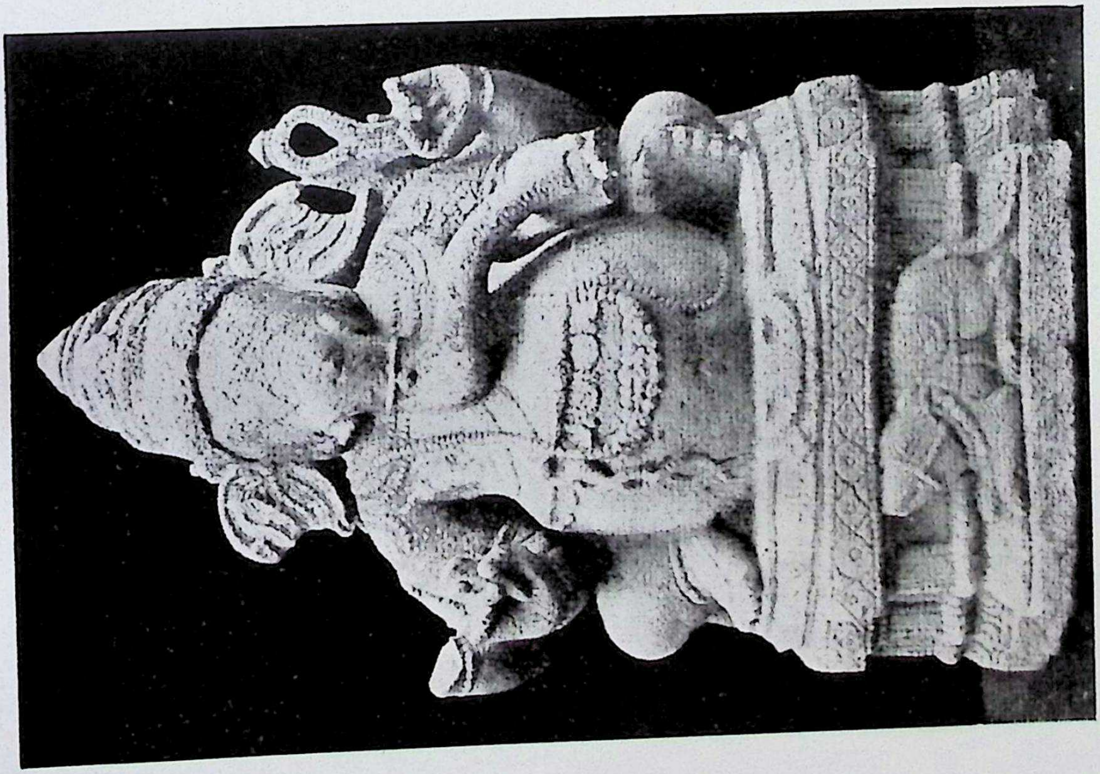


a. Gaṇeśa and *śakti* from Bundelkhaṇḍ

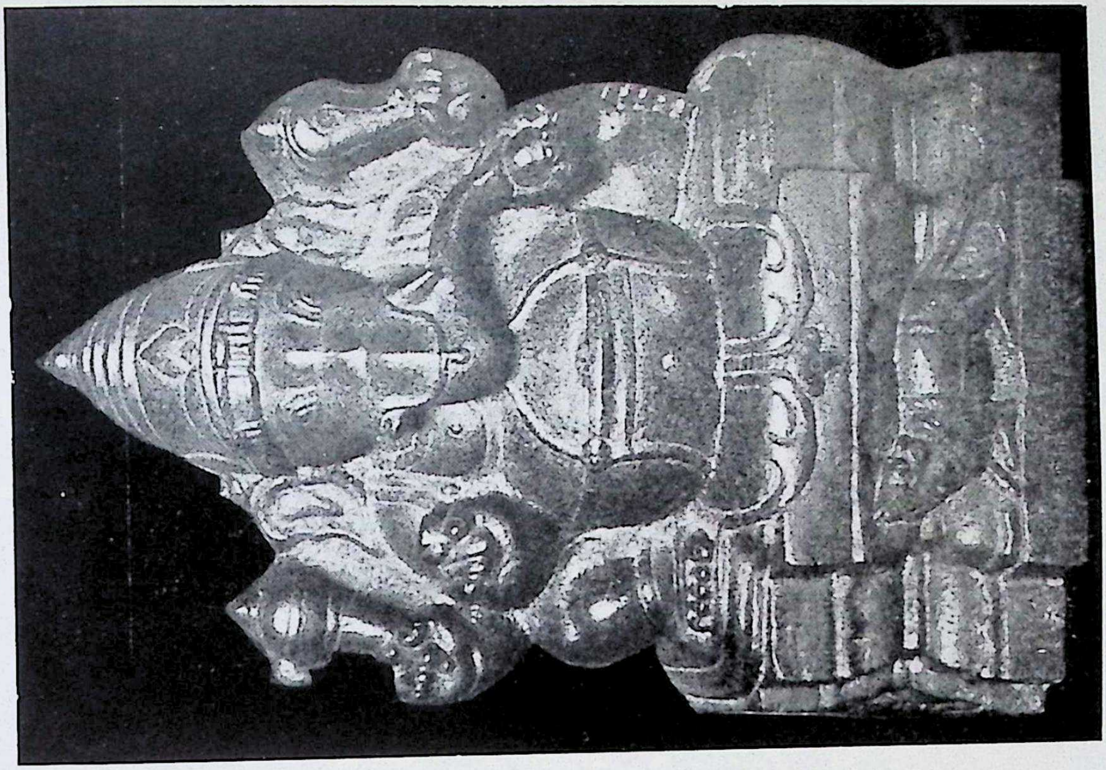


b. Five-headed Gaṇapati

PLATE 5

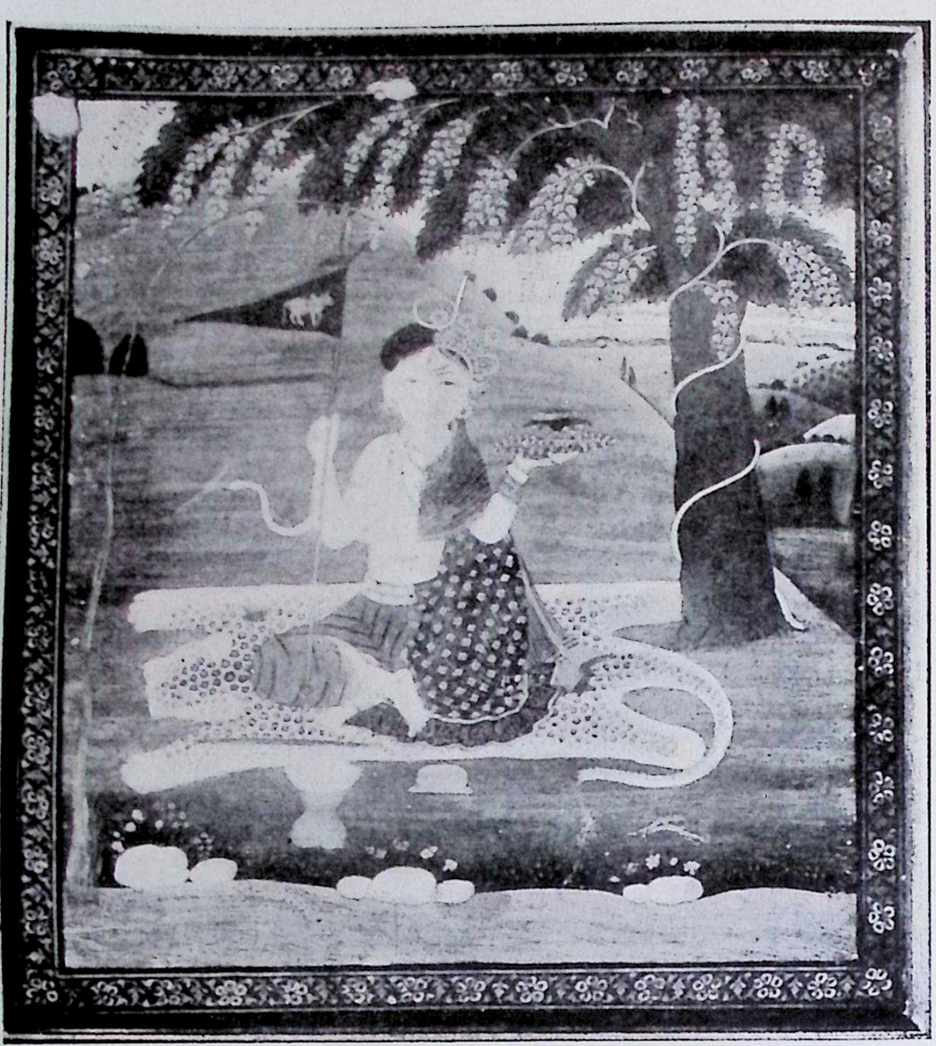


a. Dravidian image

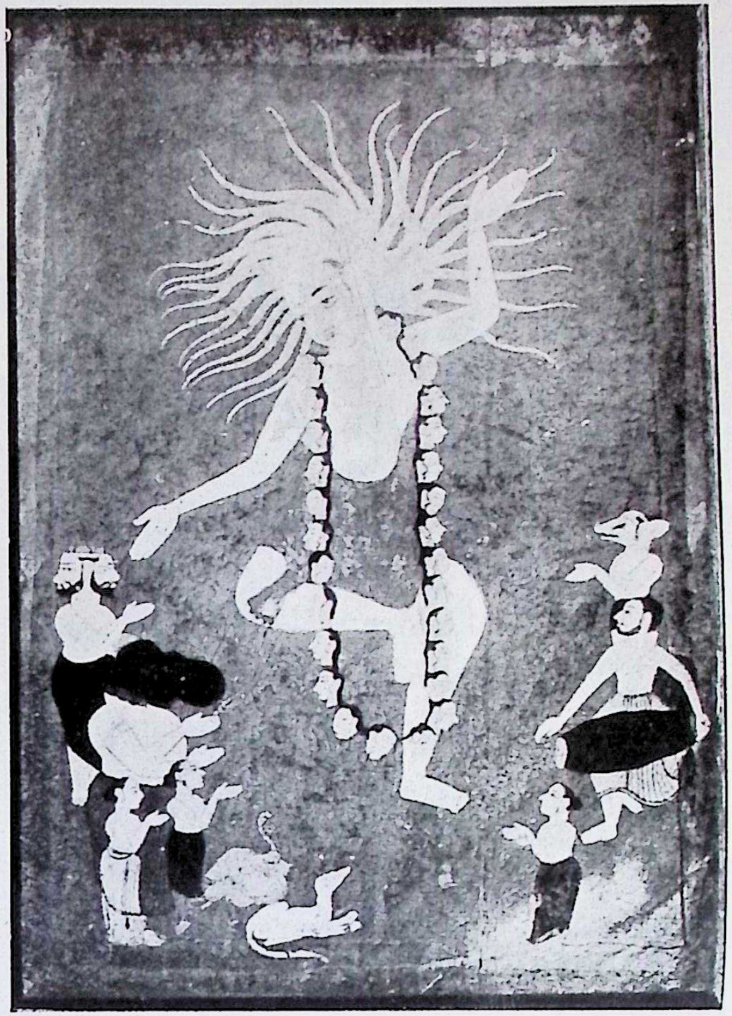


b. Dravidian image

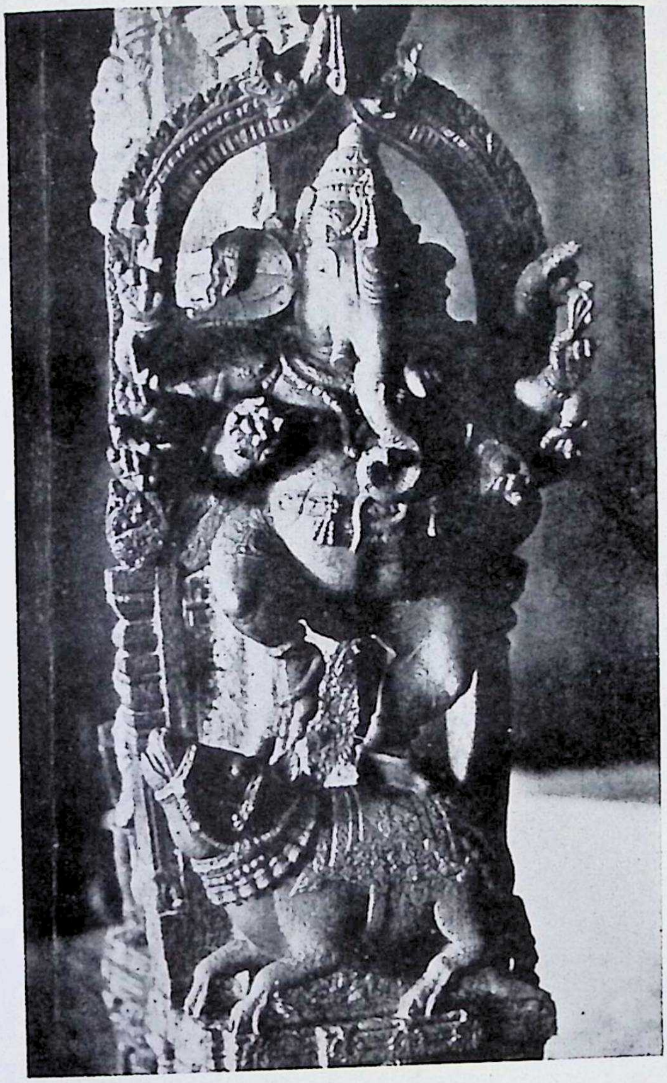
PLATE 6



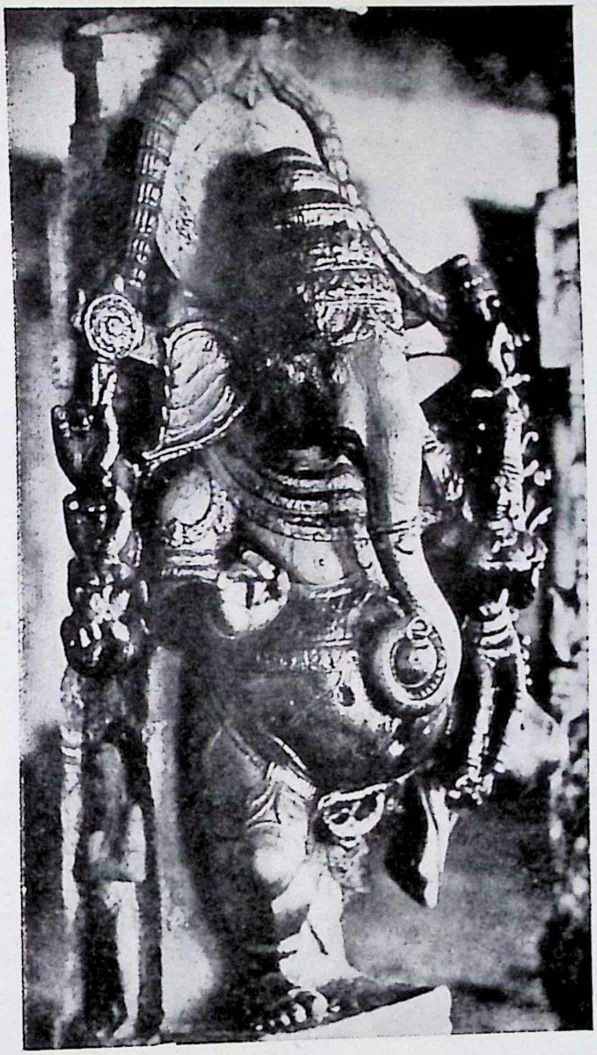
a. Śiva and Pārvatī as *ardhanārīśa*



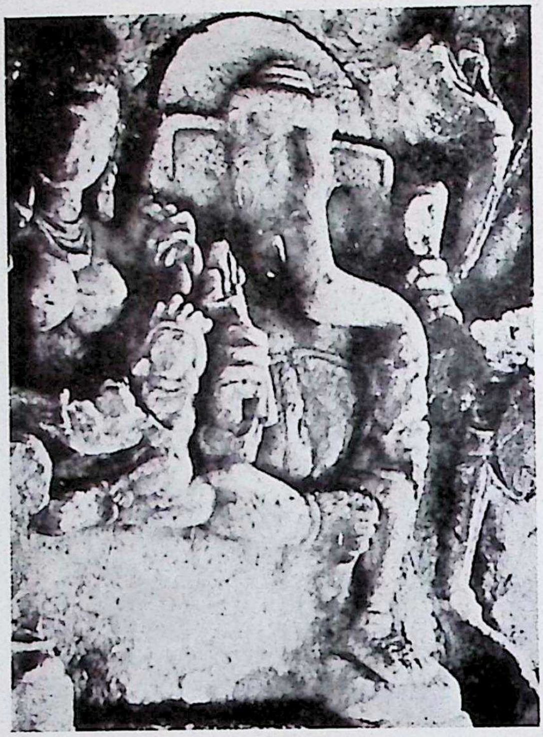
b. Śiva dancing the *tāṇḍava*



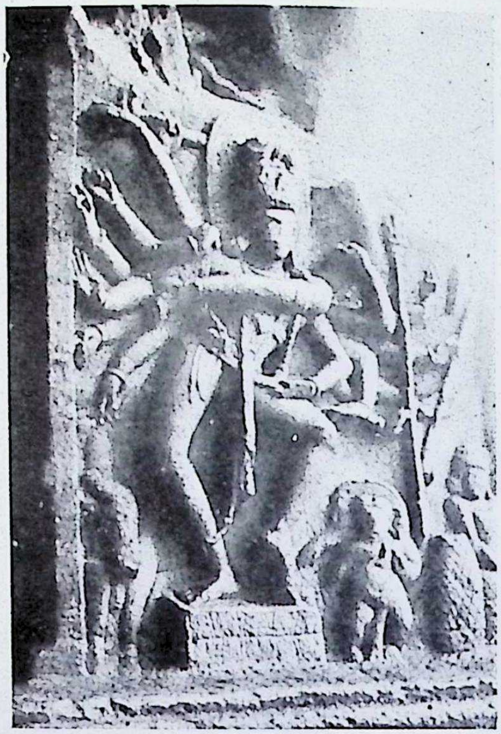
a. Gaṇeśa dancing on rat



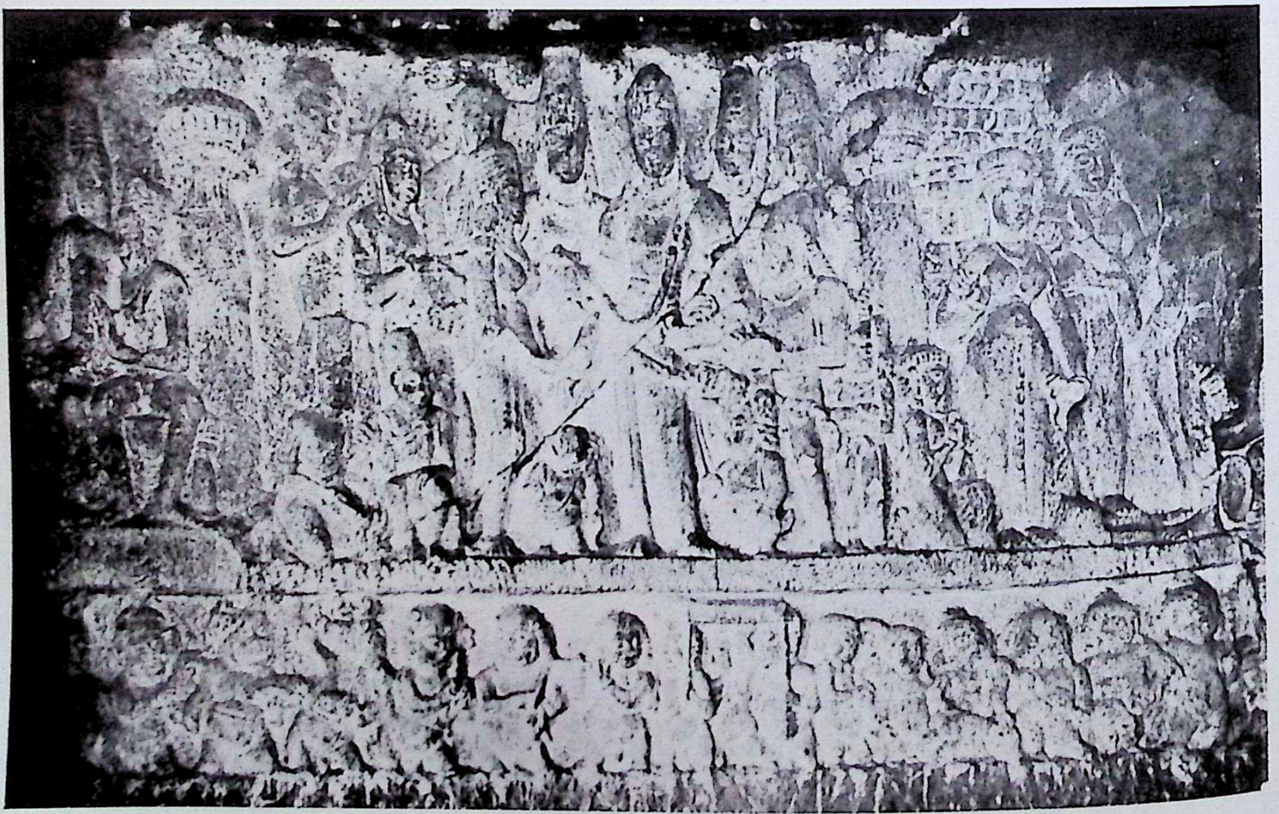
b. Gaṇeśa holding wine jar in trunk



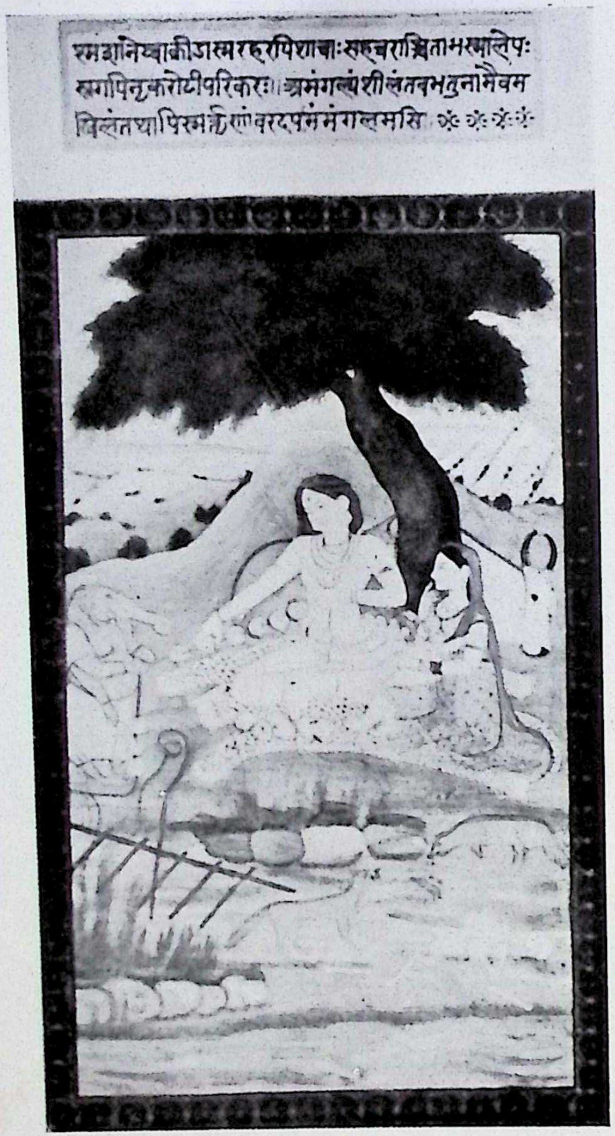
a. Gaṇeśa in the Rāvaṇa-kā-khāī



b. Śiva dancing the *tāṇḍava* at Bādāmi

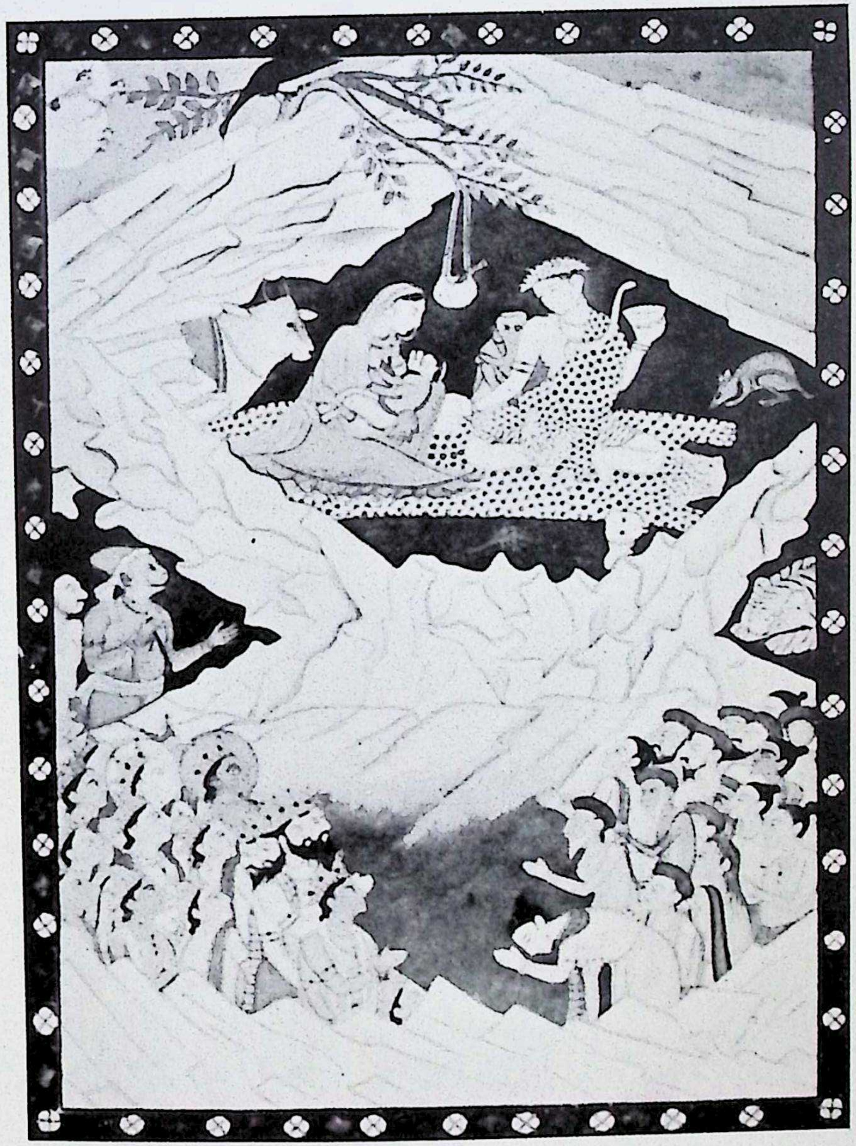


c. Marriage ceremony of Śiva and Pārvatī at Ellora



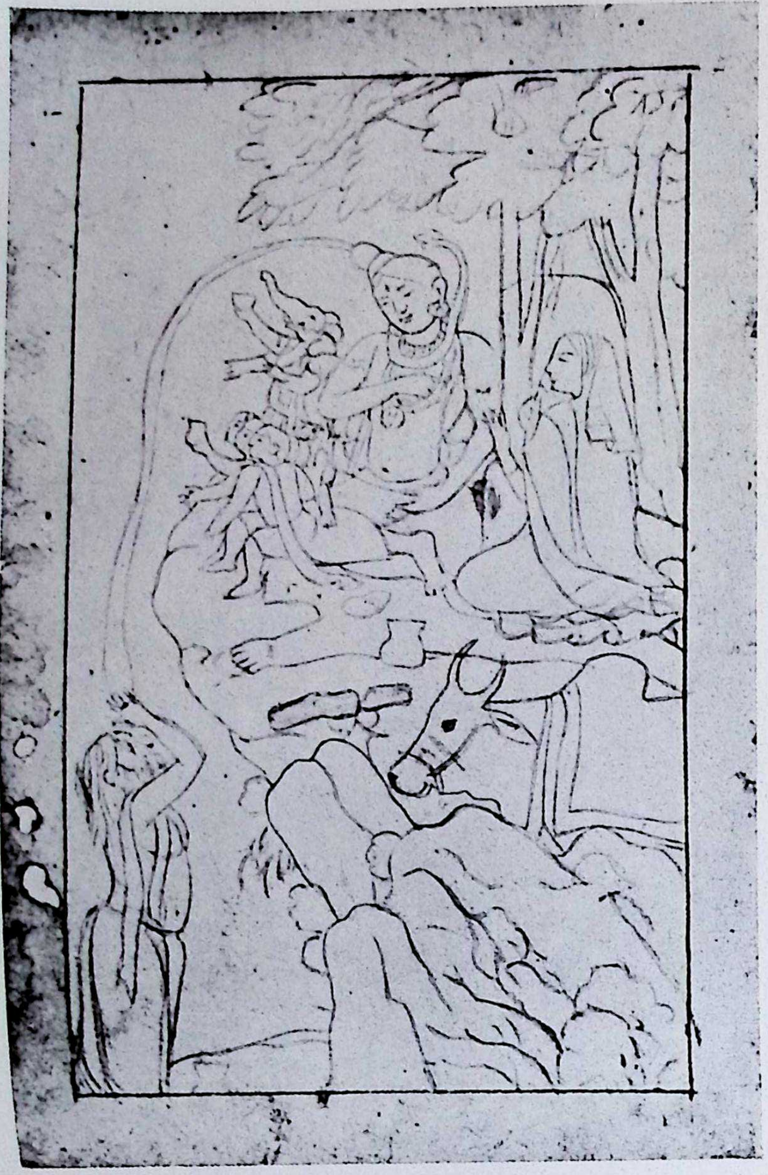
श्मशानिष्वाक्रीडास्मरहरपिशाचाः सहचराश्चिताभस्मालेपः
स्रगपिनृकरोटीपरिकरः। अमंगल्यंशीलंतवभवतुनामैवम
खिलंतथापिस्मर्तॄणांवरदपरमंमंगलमसि ॐ ॐ ॐ

a. Śiva-Bhūteśvara

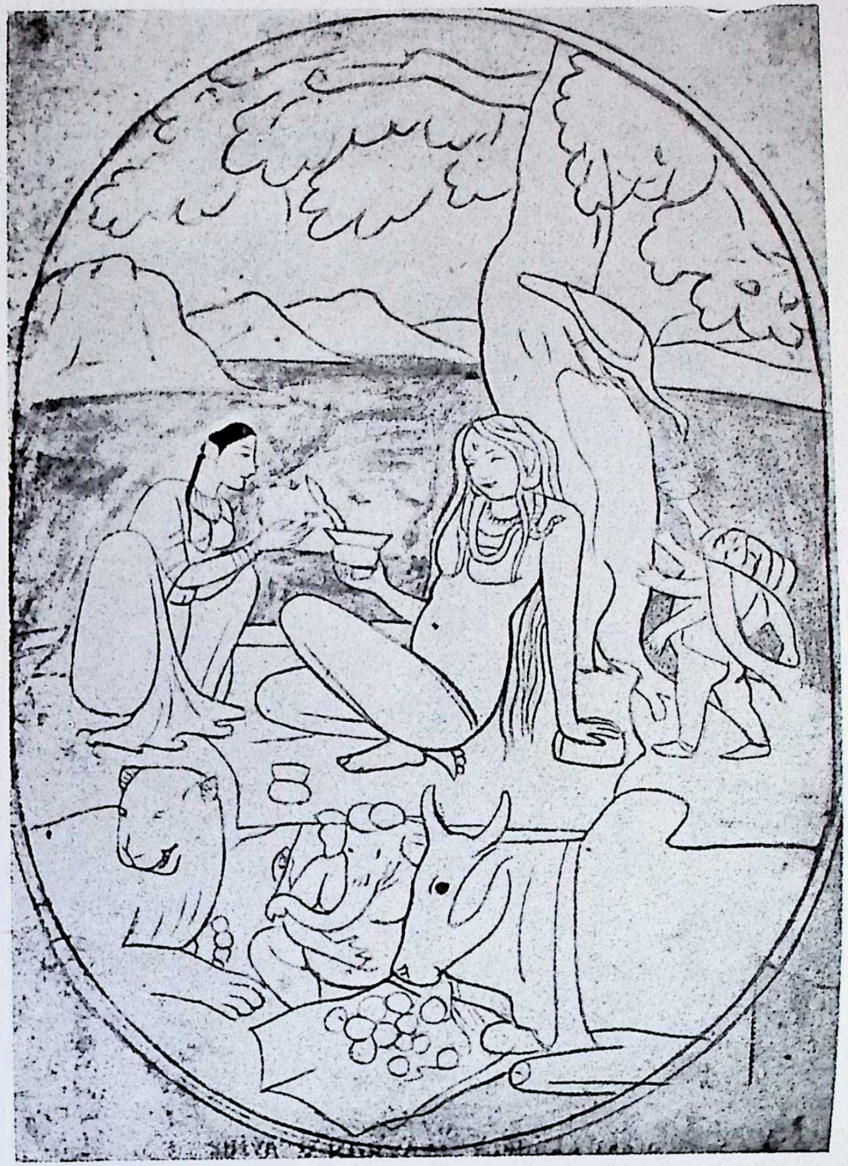


b. Adoration of Śiva as Destroyer

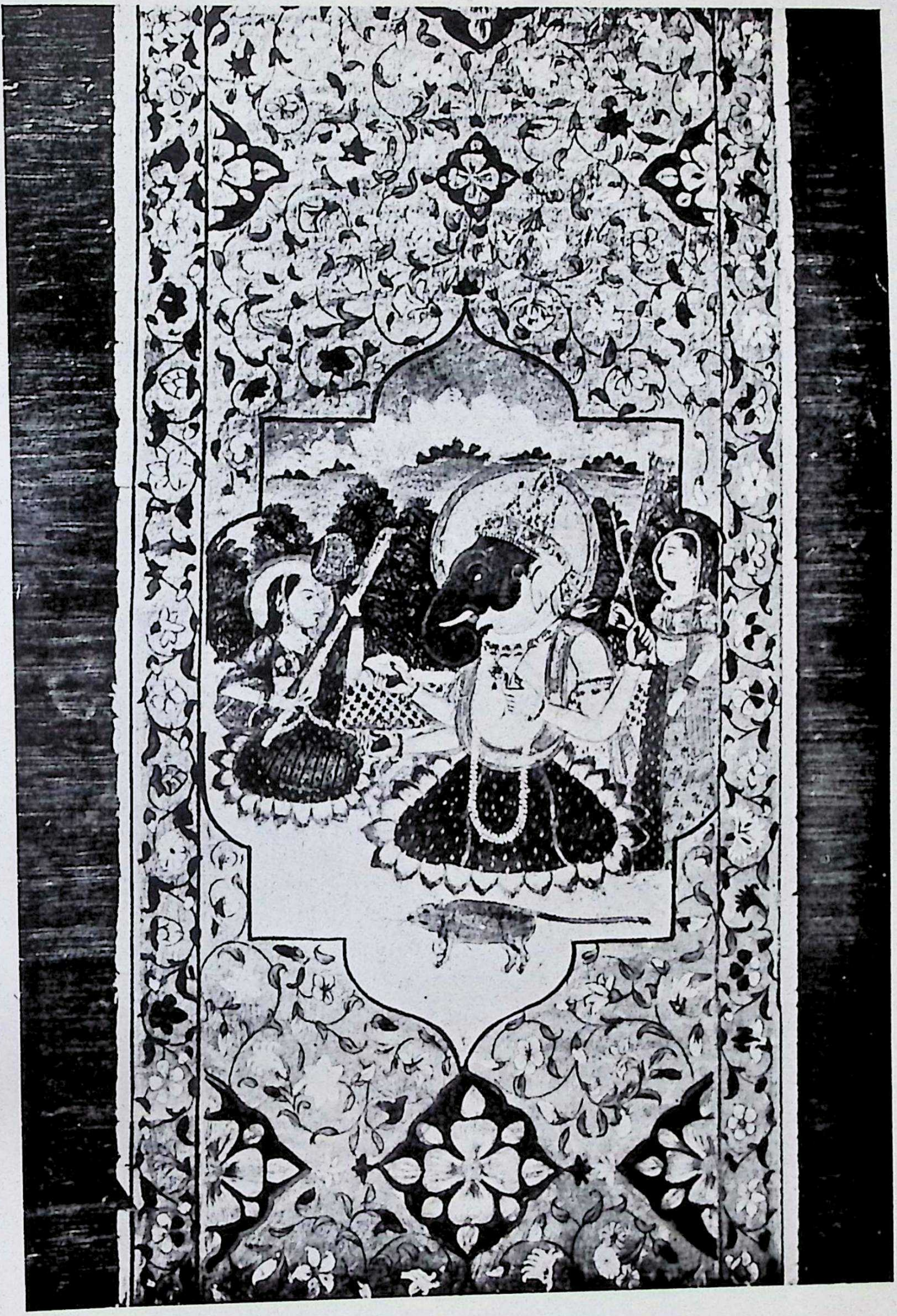
PLATE 10



a. Śiva, 'Upholder of the Ganges'

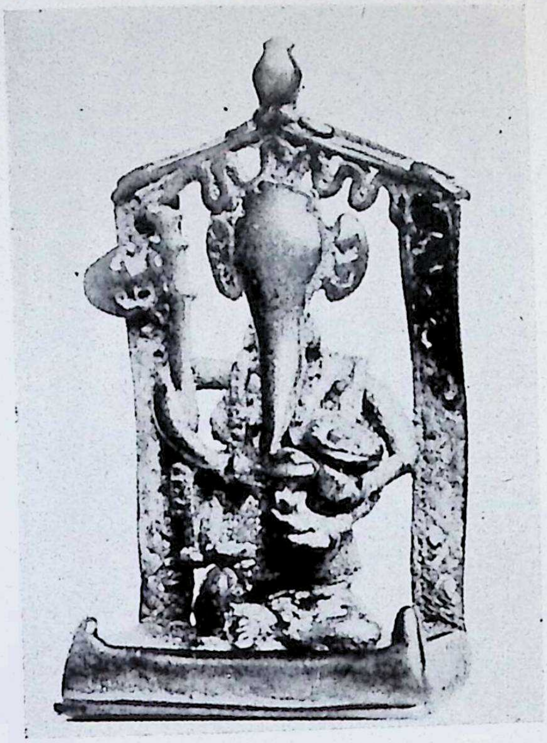


b. Rajput drawing in the British Museum

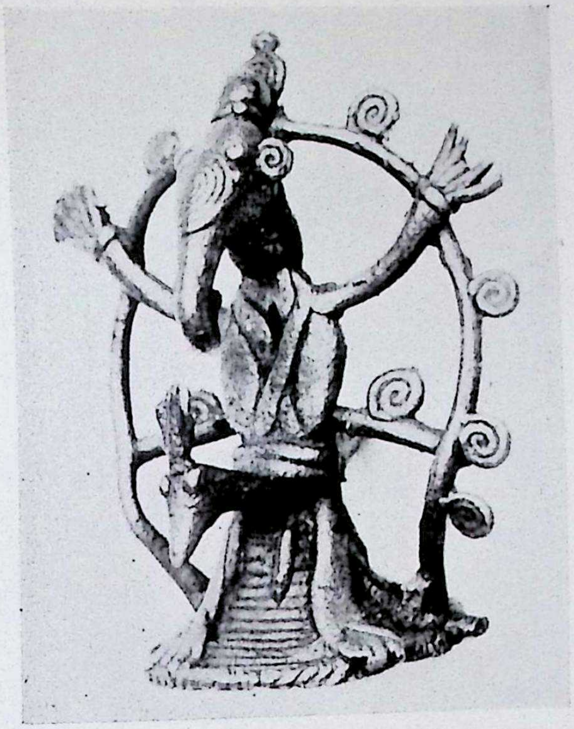


Gaṇeśa with Buddhi and Siddhi (?)

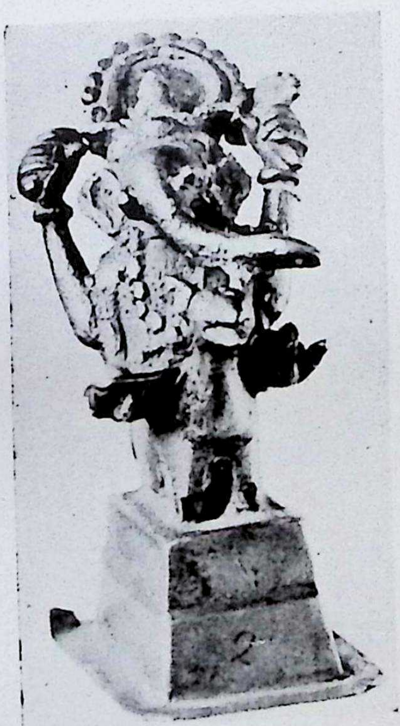
PLATE 12 *is in colour*
and appears facing page 24



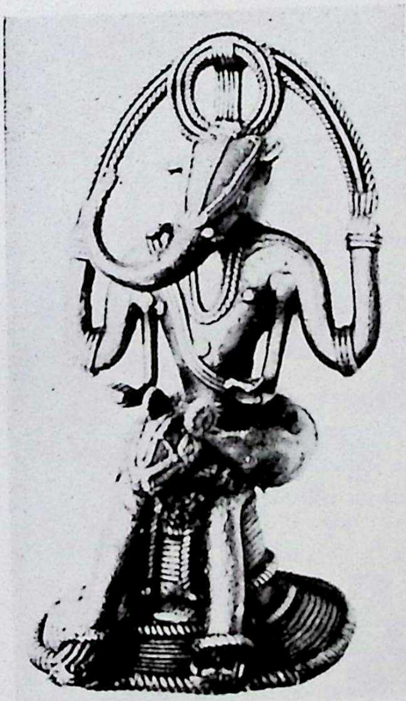
a. Image in the British Museum



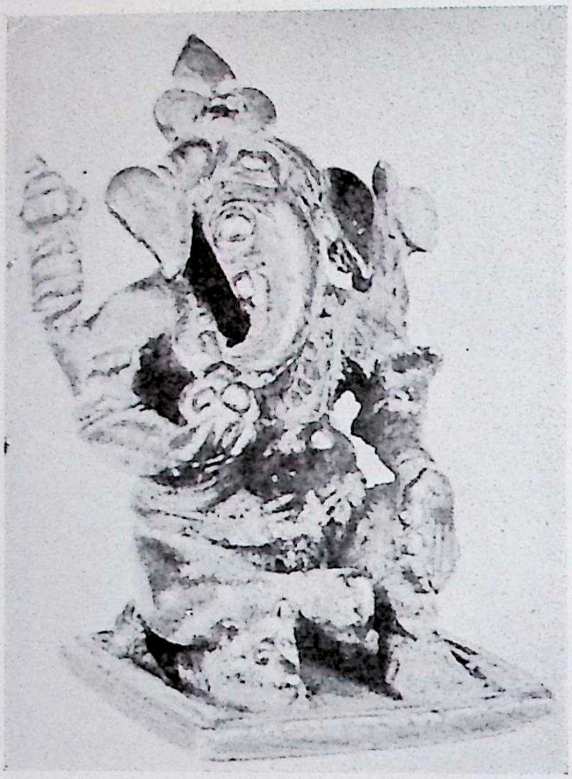
b. Collection Nahar, Calcutta



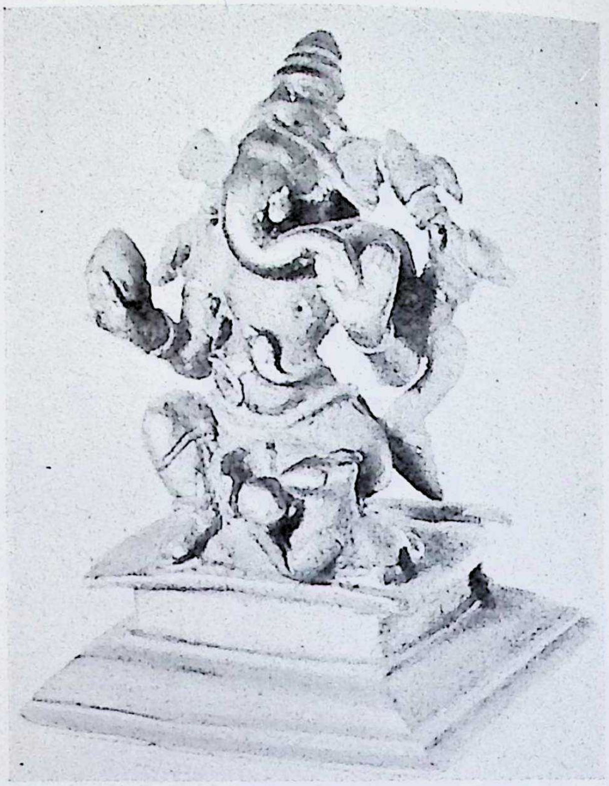
c. Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich



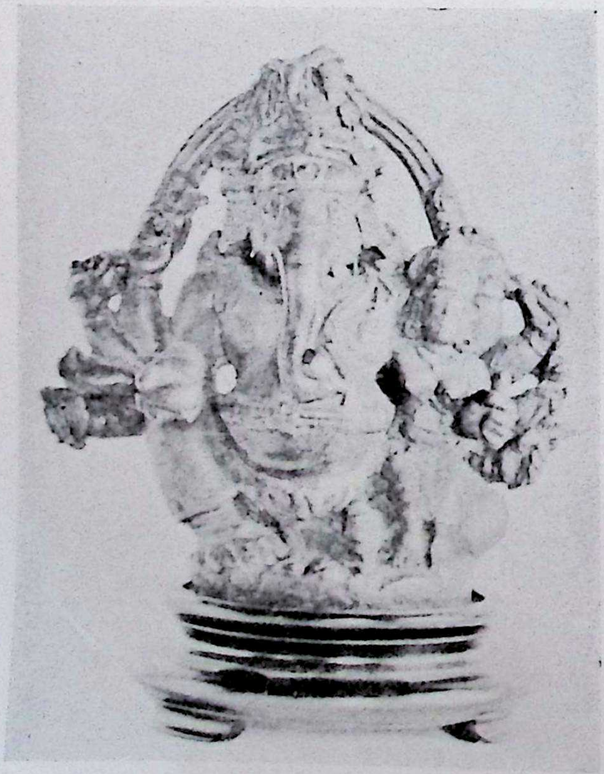
d. Collection Nahar, Calcutta



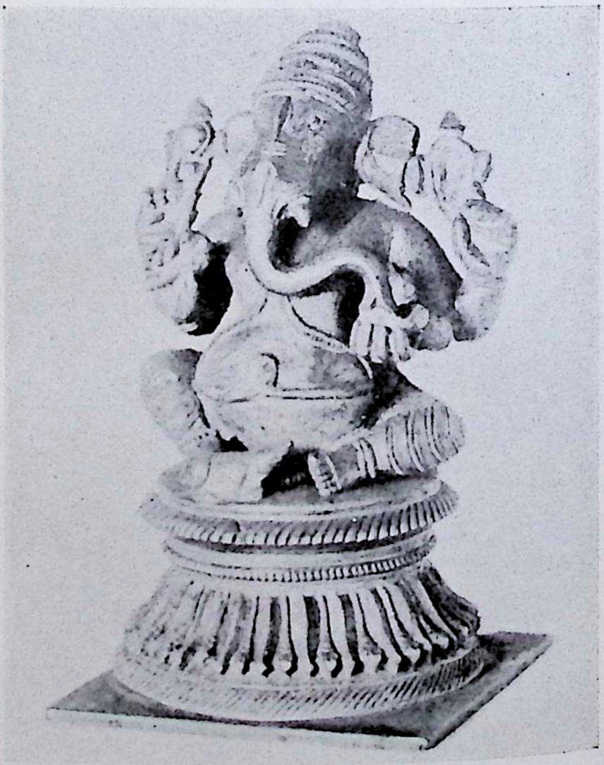
a. Early Nepalese bronze image



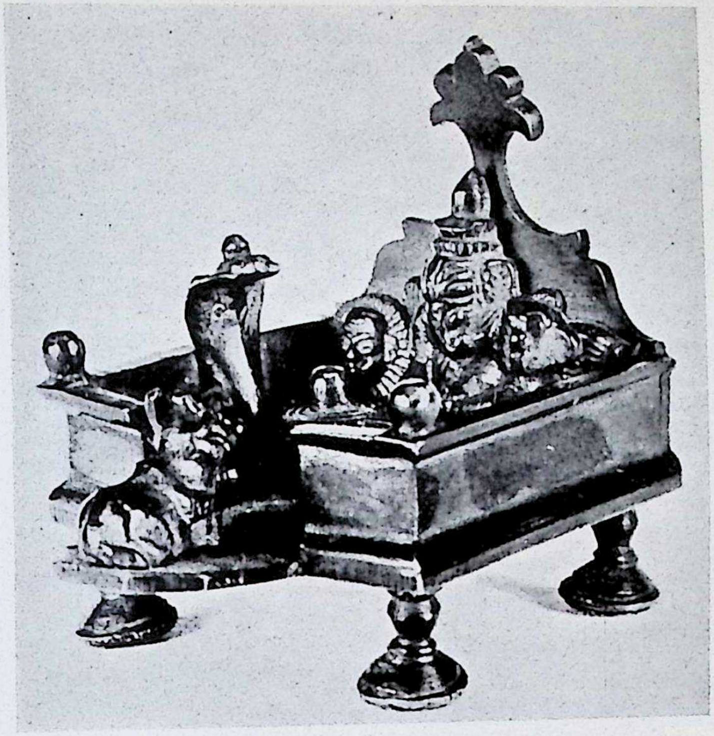
b. Gaṇeśa holding the Gaṇapati-*liṅga*



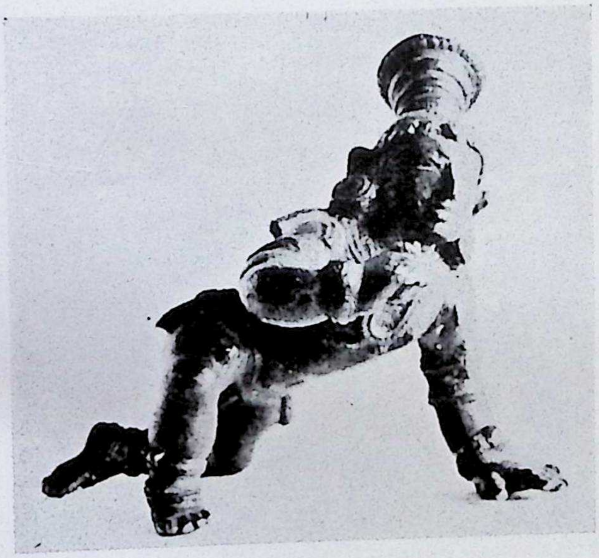
c. Ten-armed Gaṇeśa and *śakti*



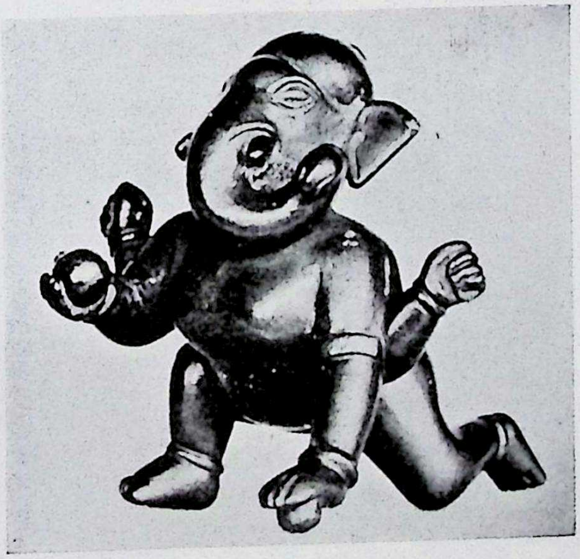
d. Image worshipped by the Śaivite sect



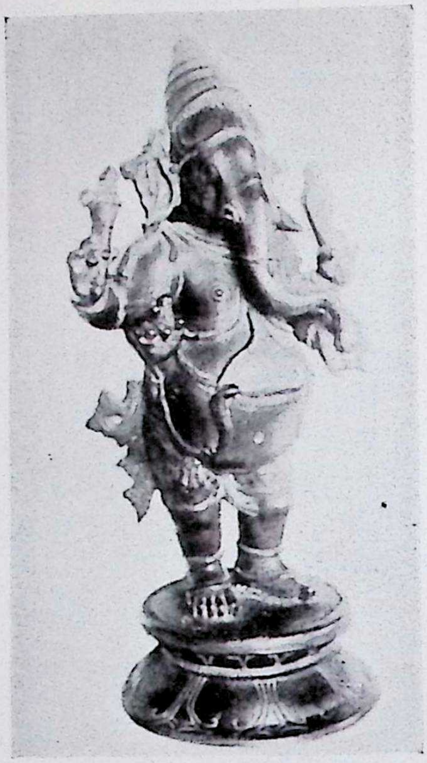
a. Altar of the Five Great Brahman Gods



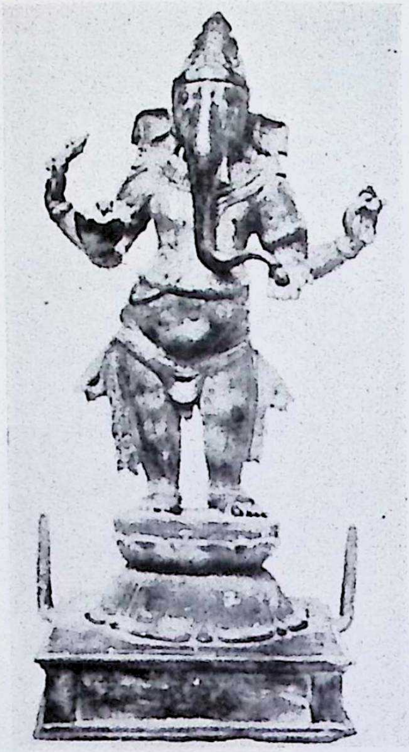
b. Bāla-Kṛiṣṇa



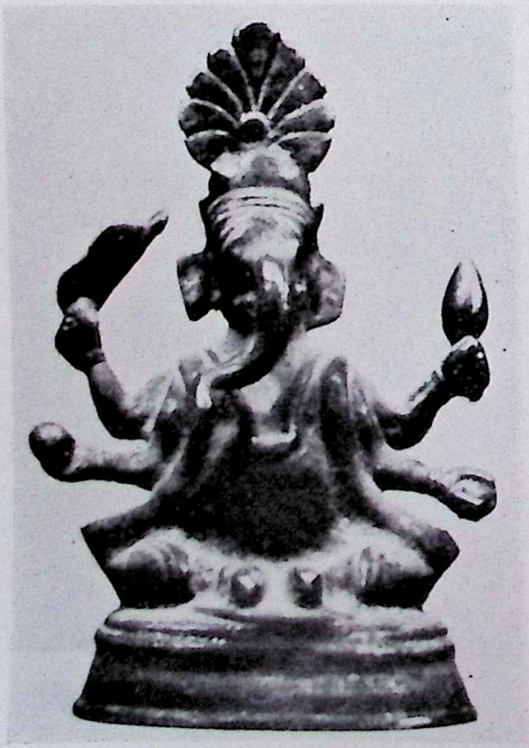
c. Bāla-Gaṇeśa



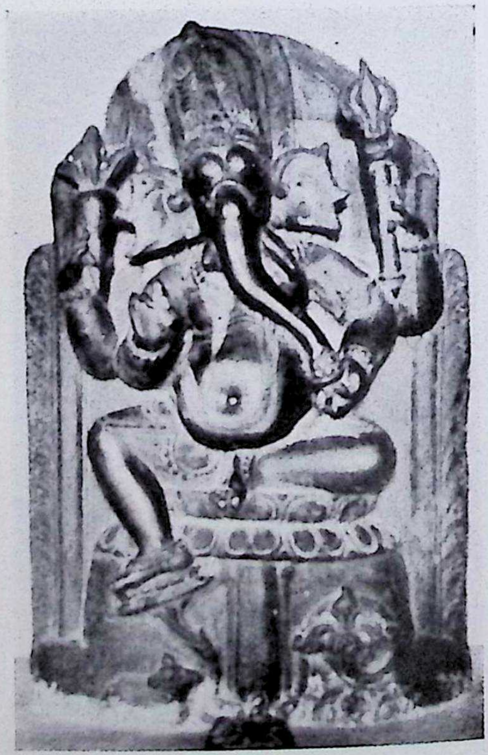
a. Image from North India



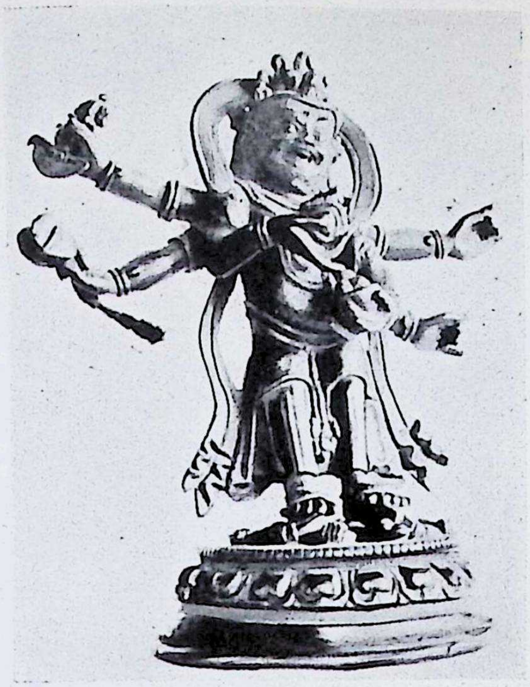
b. Image from South India



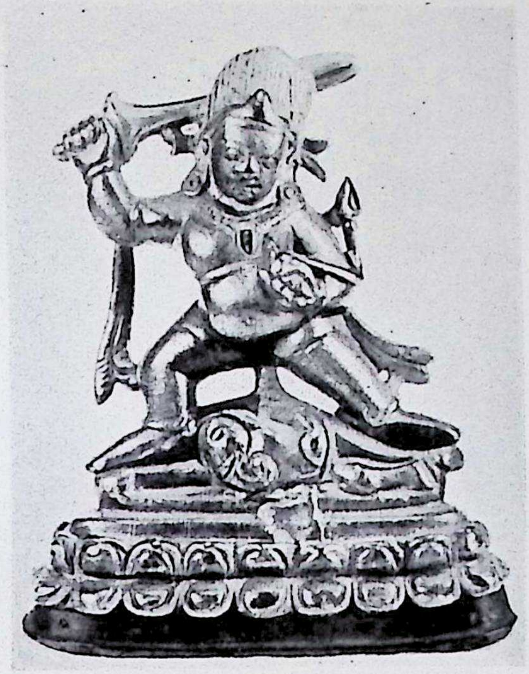
c. Six-armed Nepalese figure



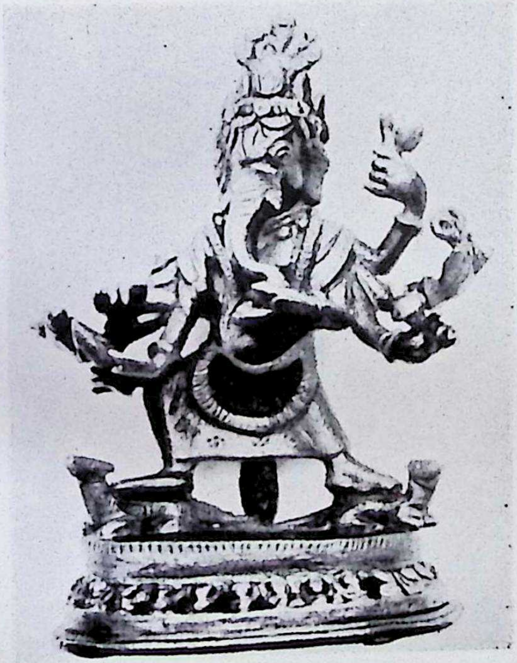
d. Bengalese image holding the radish



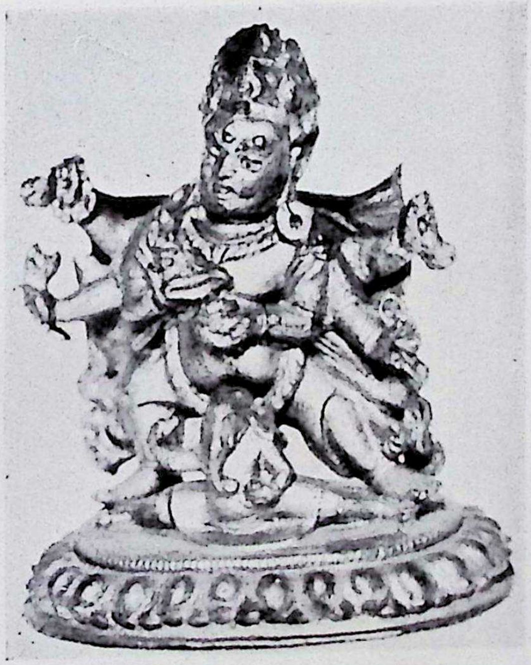
a. Mahākāla on male and female Gaṇeśas



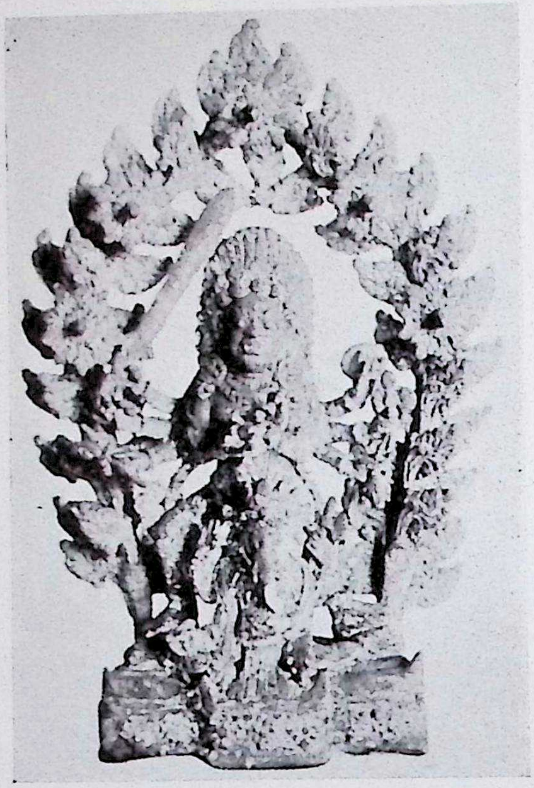
b. Mañjuśrī treading on Gaṇapati



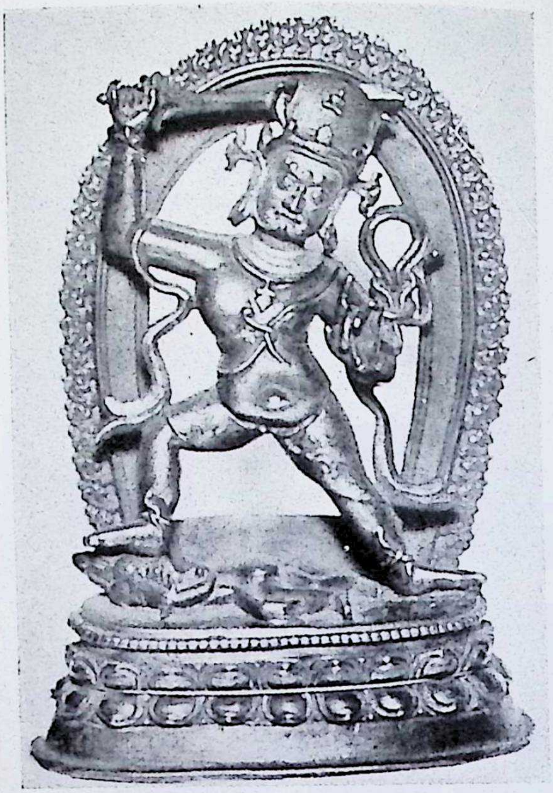
c. Nepalese Gaṇeśa standing on two rats



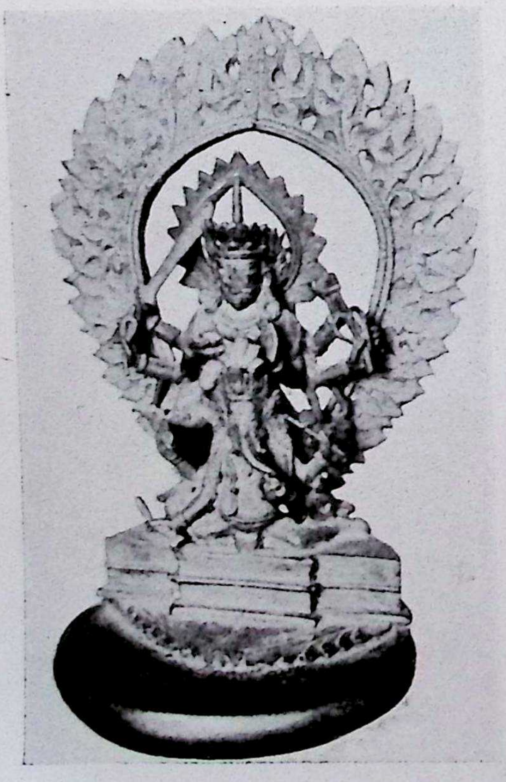
d. Mahākāla treading on Gaṇeśa



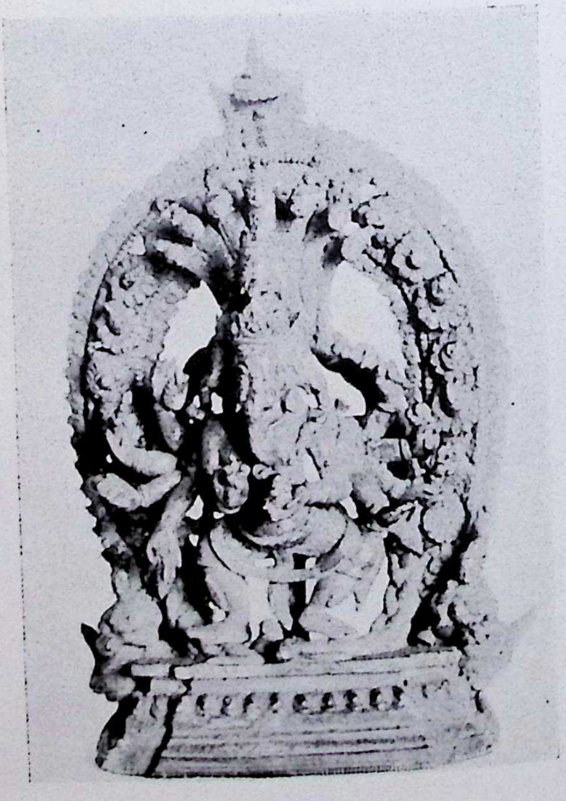
a. Gaṇeśa under the feet of Vighnāntaka



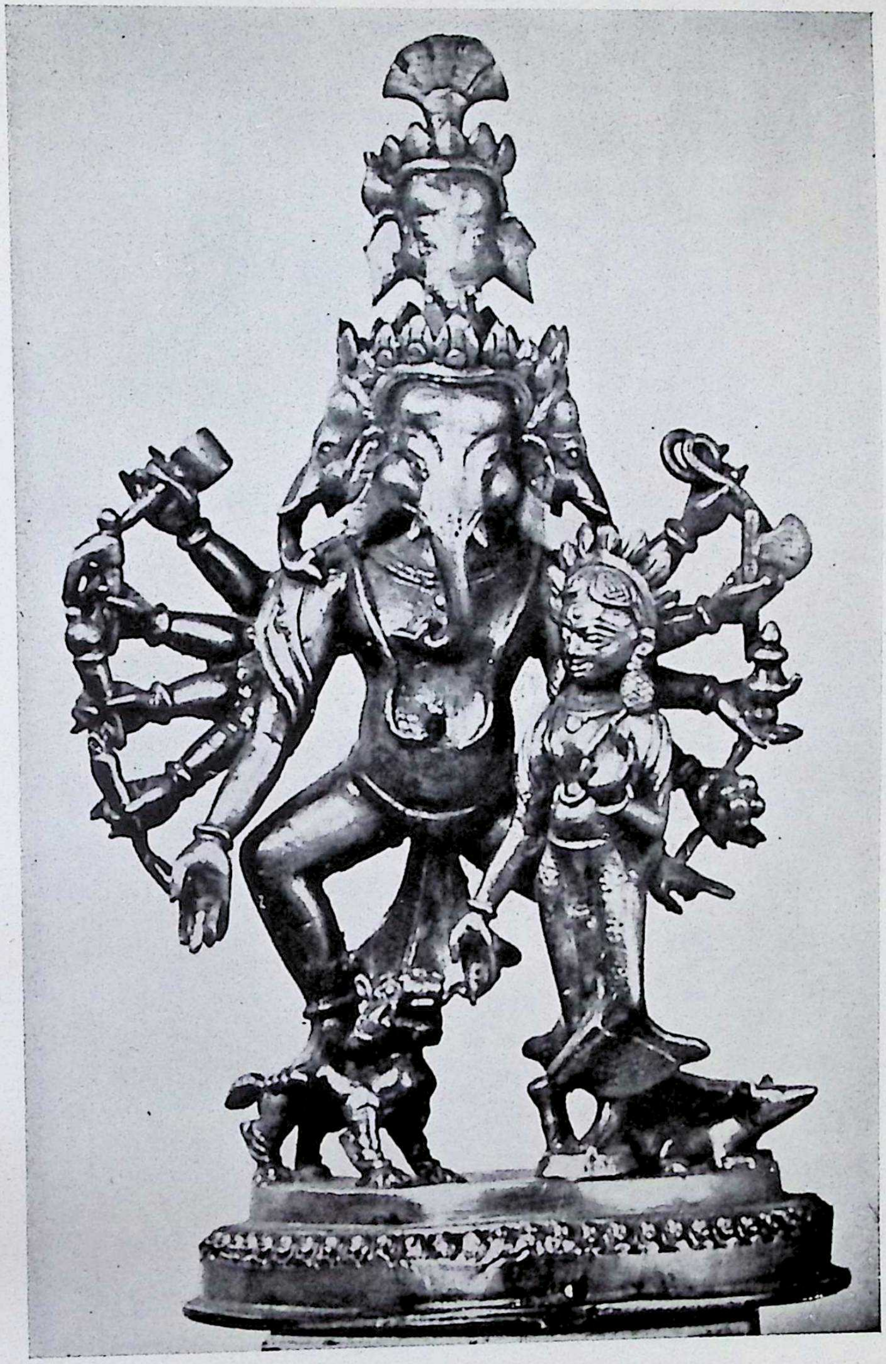
b. Mañjuśrī treading on Gaṇeśa



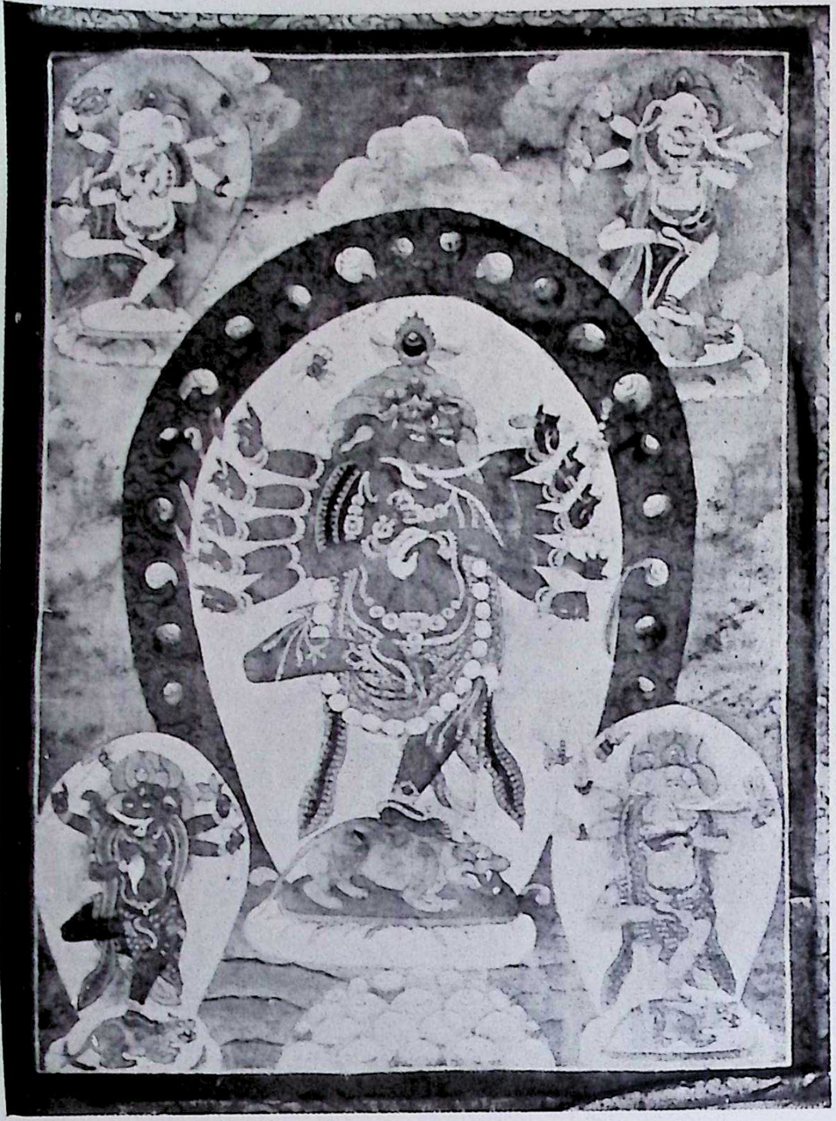
d. Vighnāntaka standing on Gaṇeśa



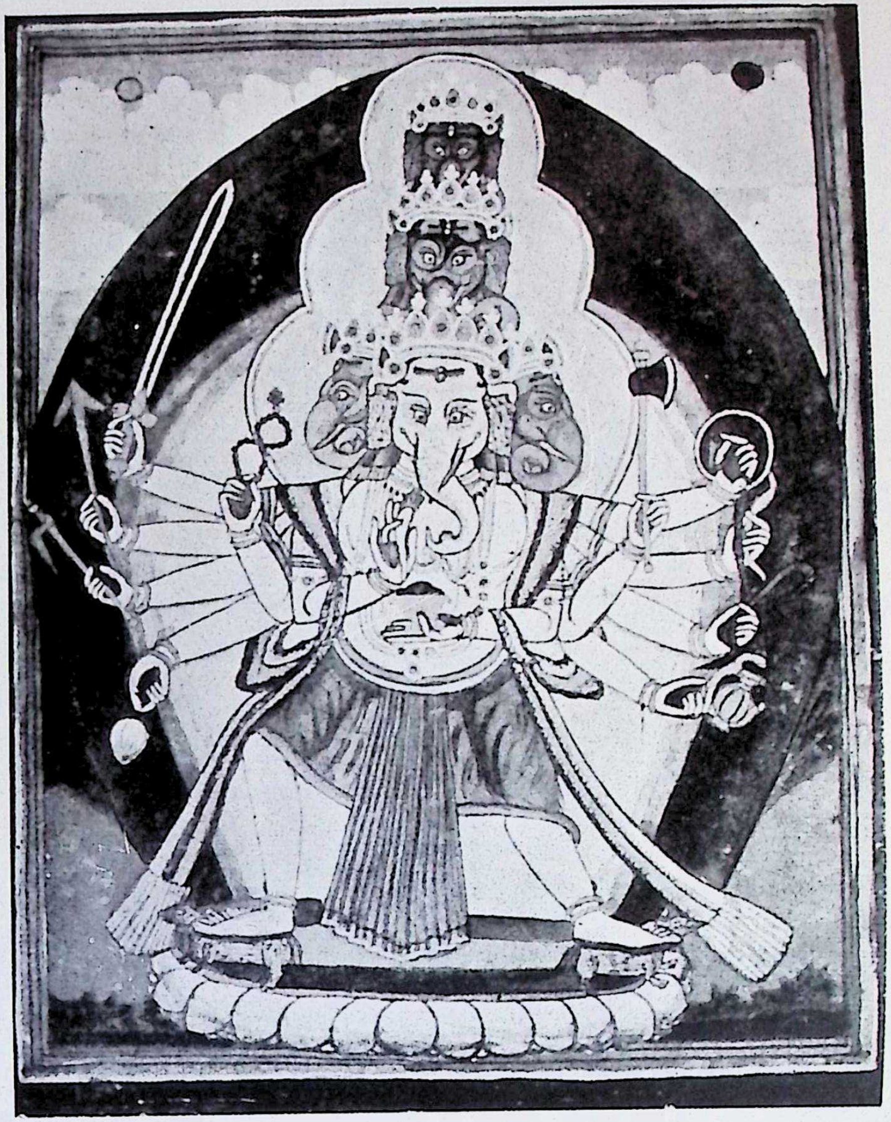
c. Nepalese Gaṇapati-Heramba



Nepalese Heramba with *śakti* standing on lion and rat

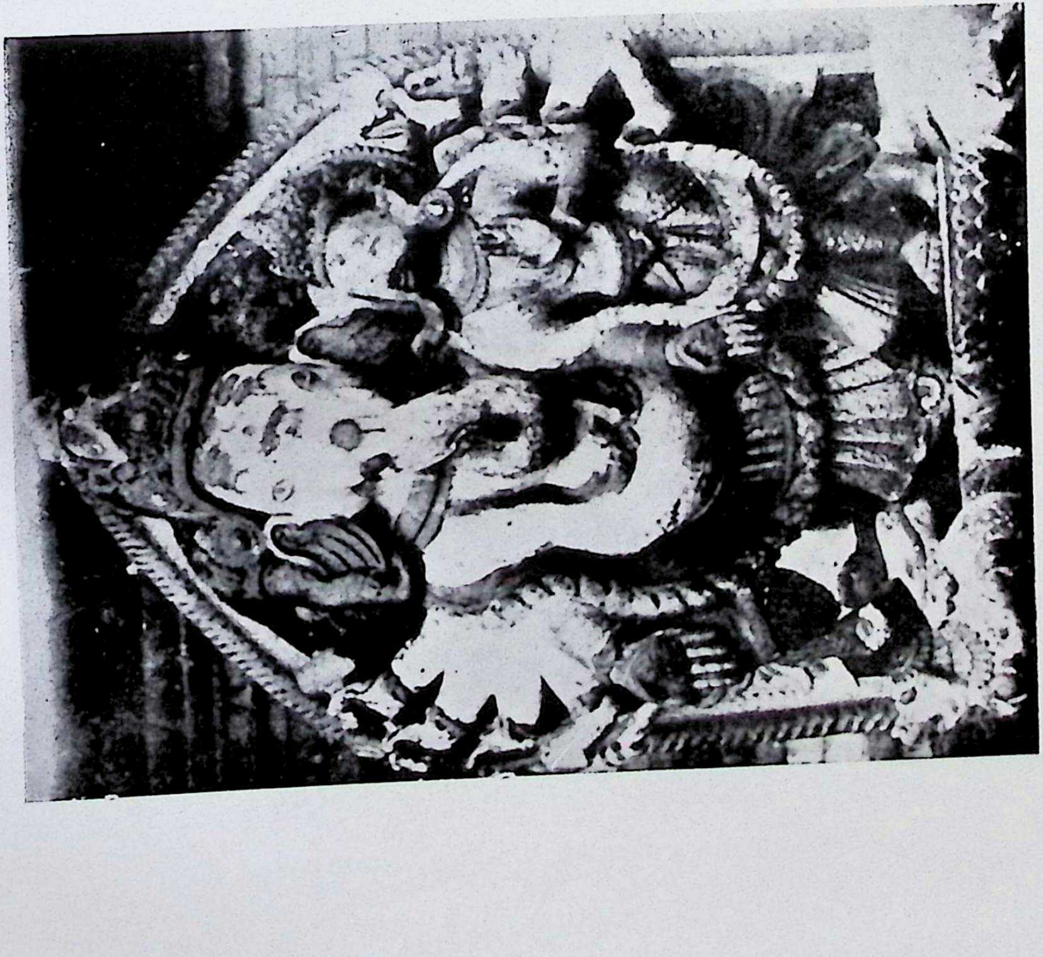


a. Nṛitta-Gaṇapati, Nepal

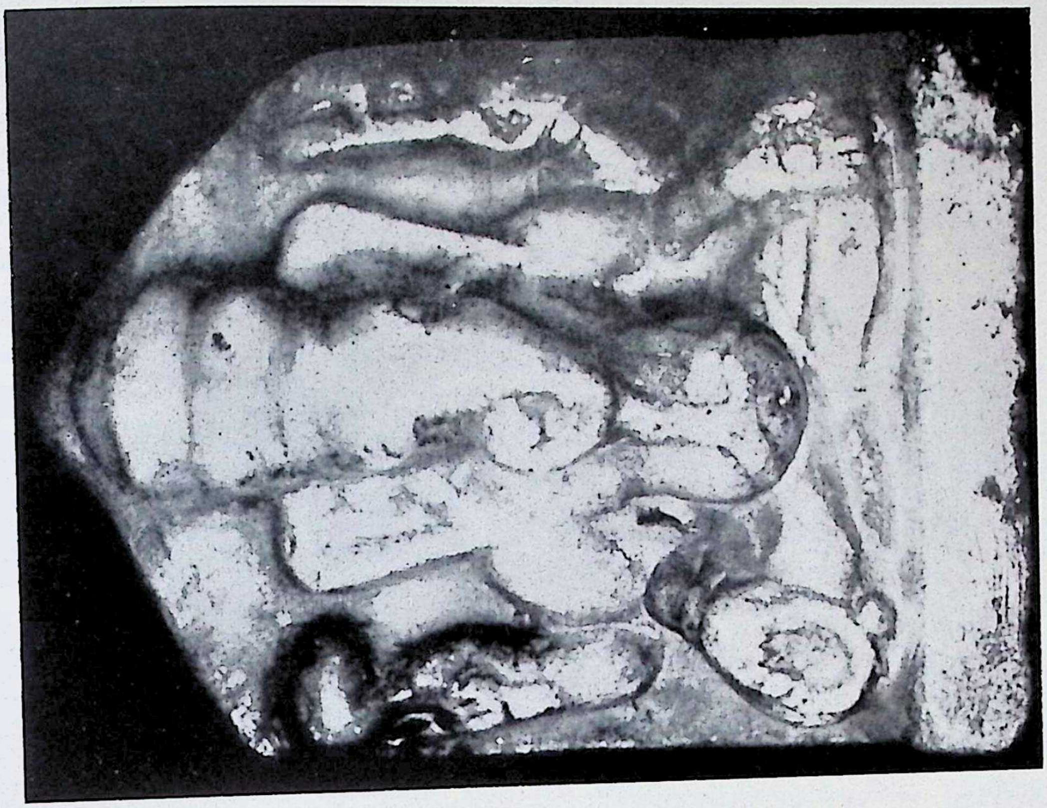


b. Gaṇapati-Heramba, Nepal

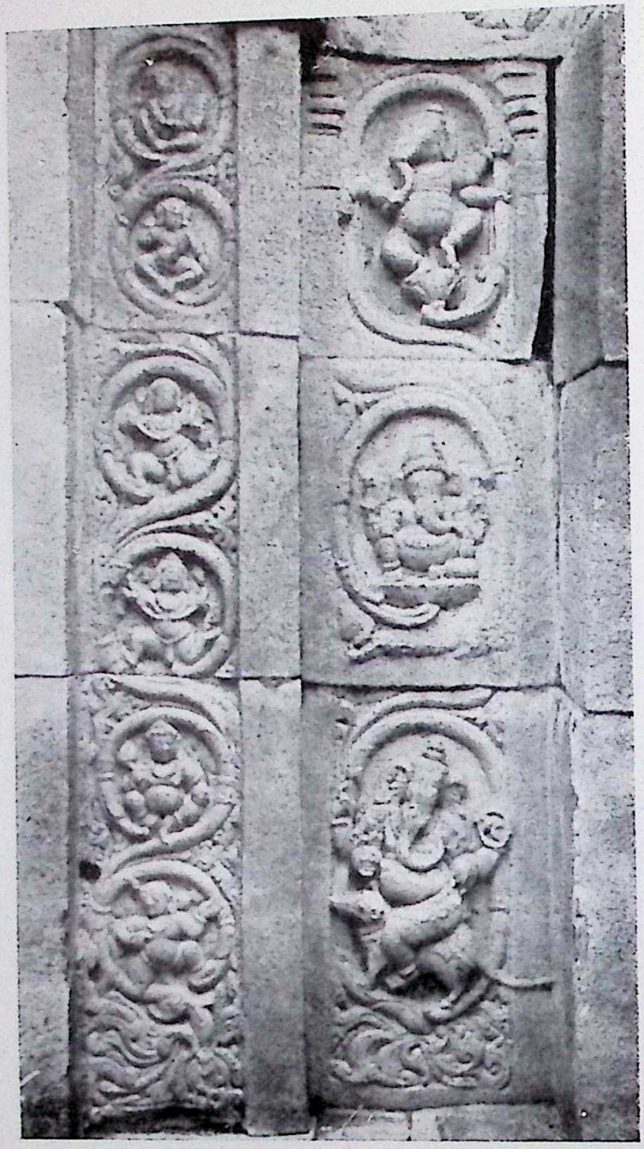
PLATE 21



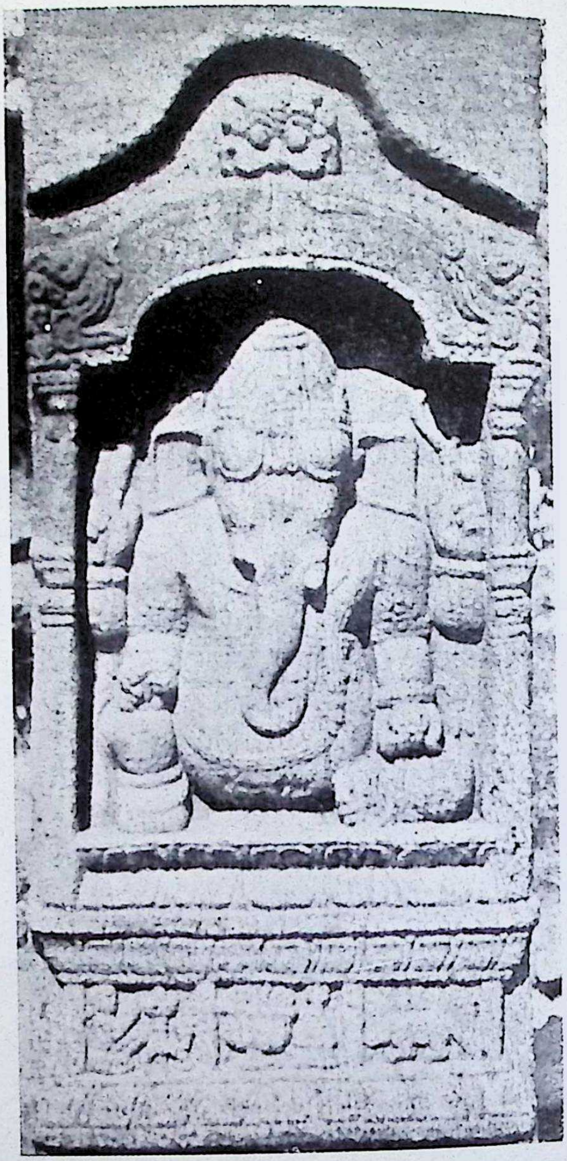
a. Tibetan Gaṇapati-Heramba



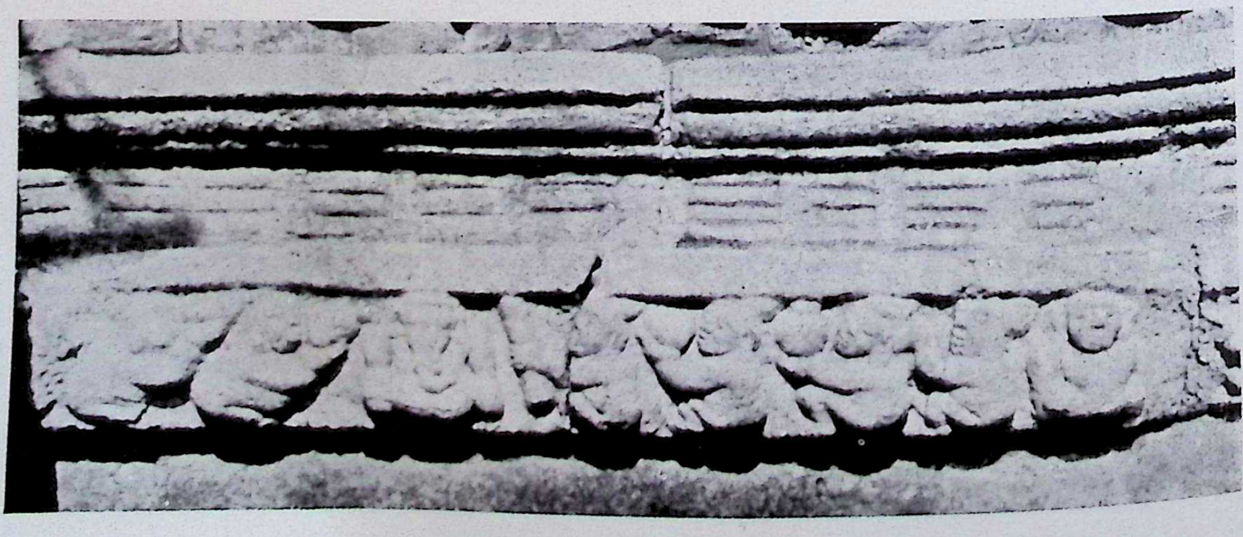
b. Early alabaster image



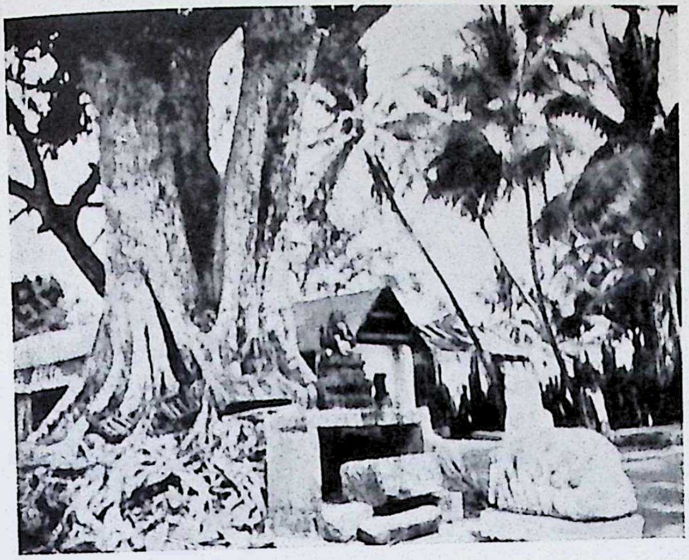
a. Gaṇeśa and the *gaṇas*



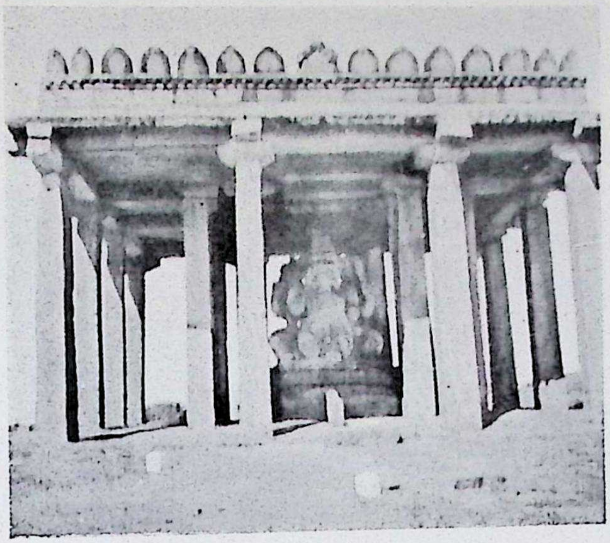
b. Carved pillar, Polonnāruva



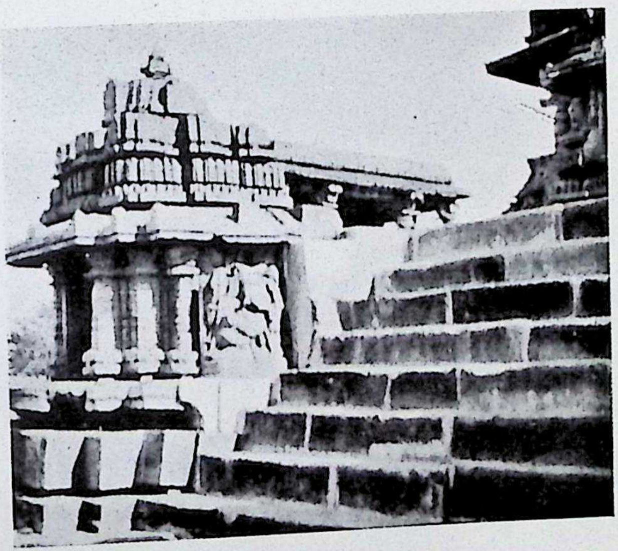
c. Gaṇeśa and the *gaṇas* on the Kantaka Cetinga *stūpa*



a. Gaṇeśa shrine, Trichinopoly

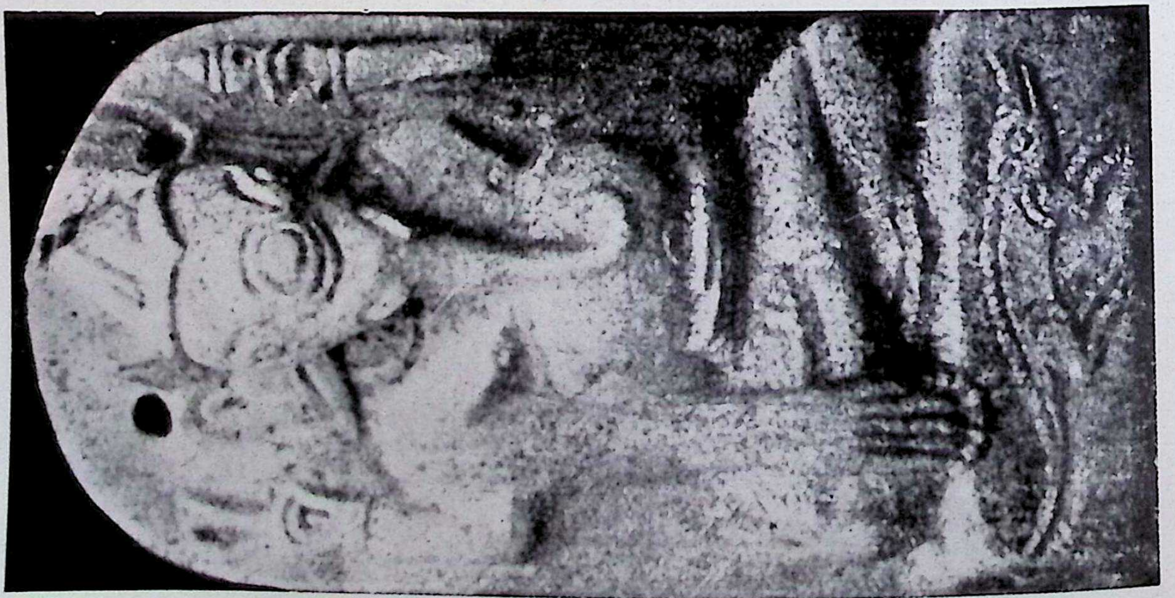


b. Gaṇeśa shrine near Hampi

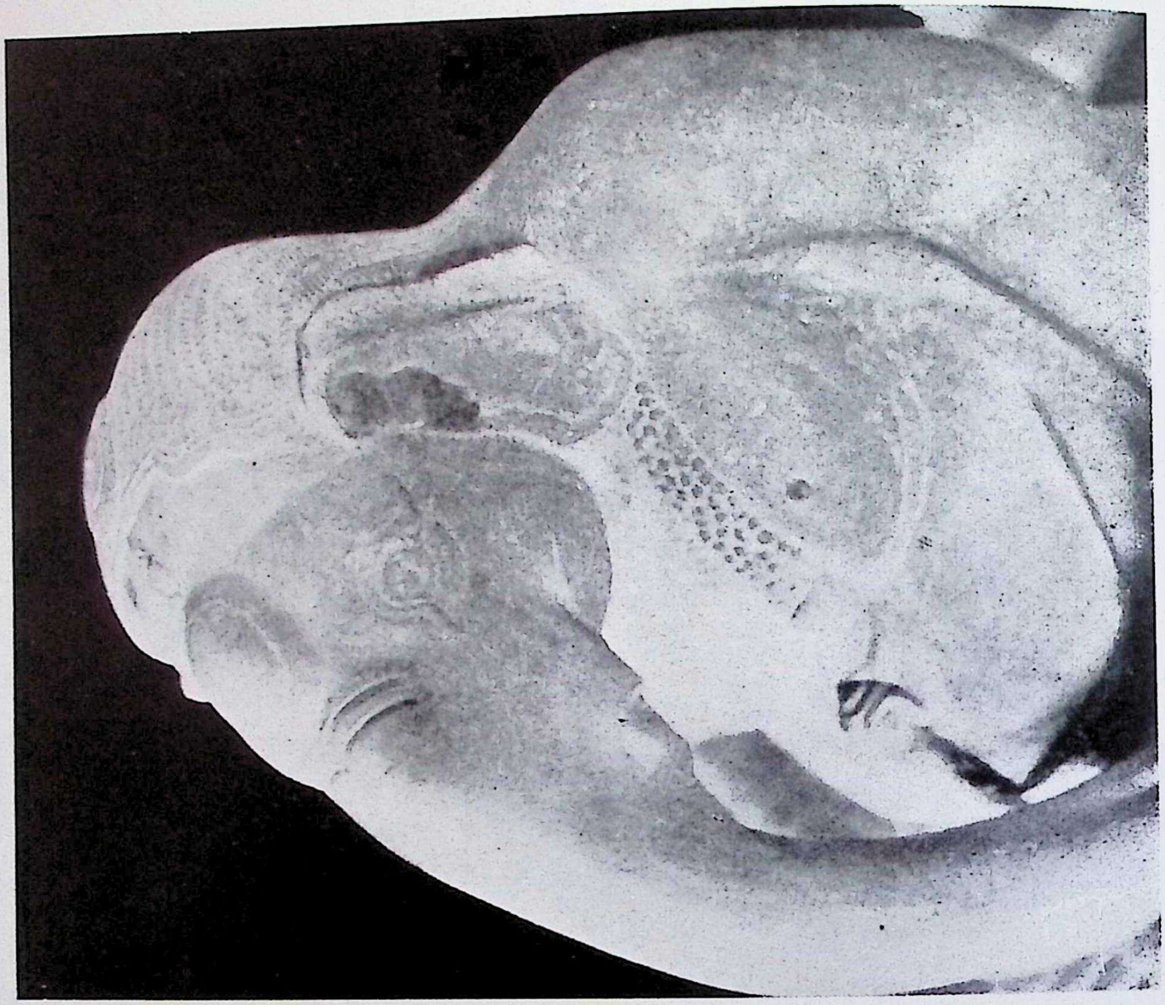


c. Gaṇeśa shrine entrance to temple, Hallabid

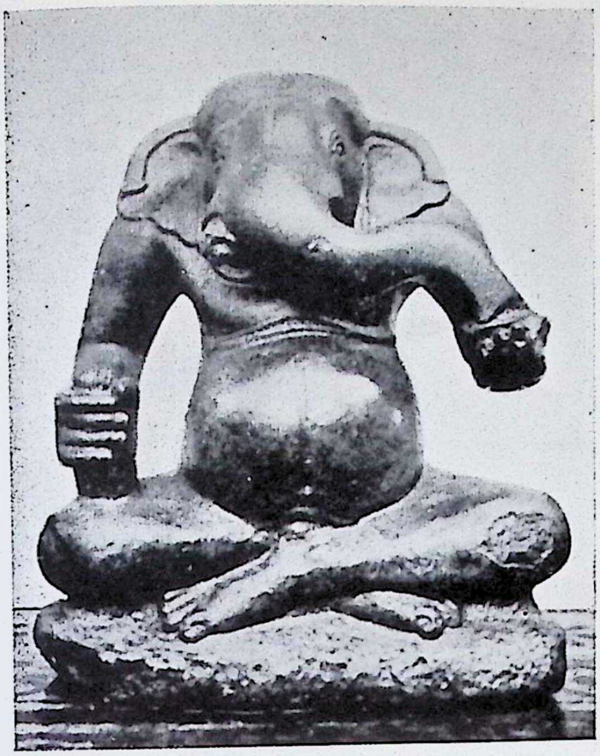
PLATE 24



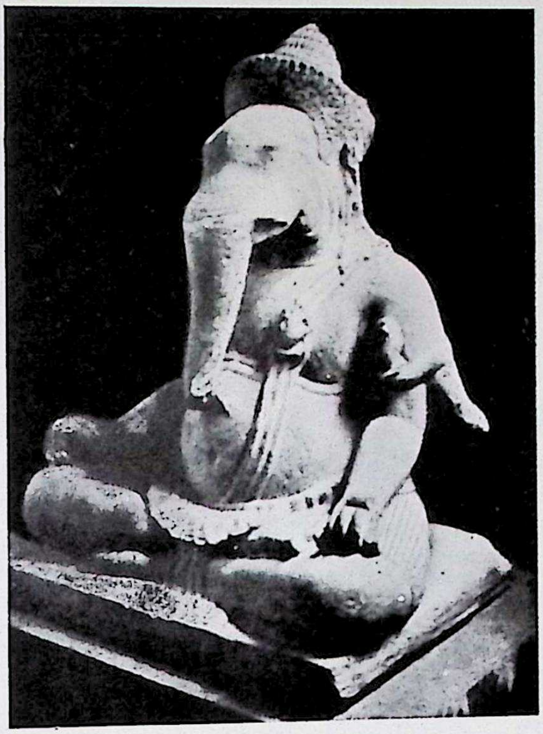
a. Gaṇeśa in the pose of a Buddha



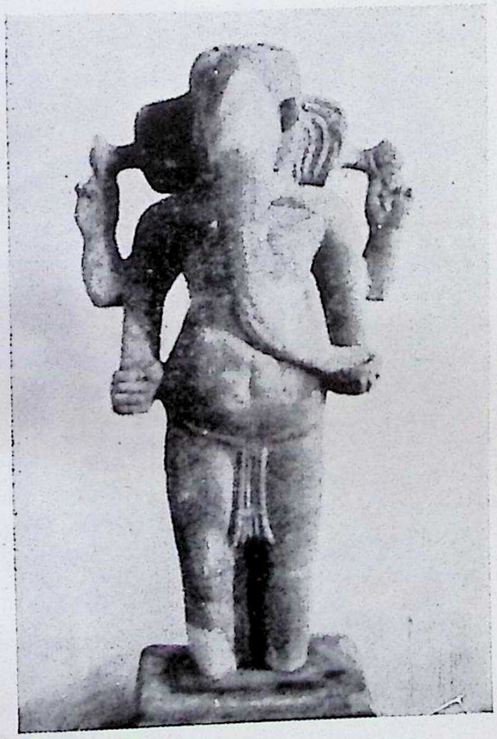
b. Cham image of Gaṇeśa with Buddhist features



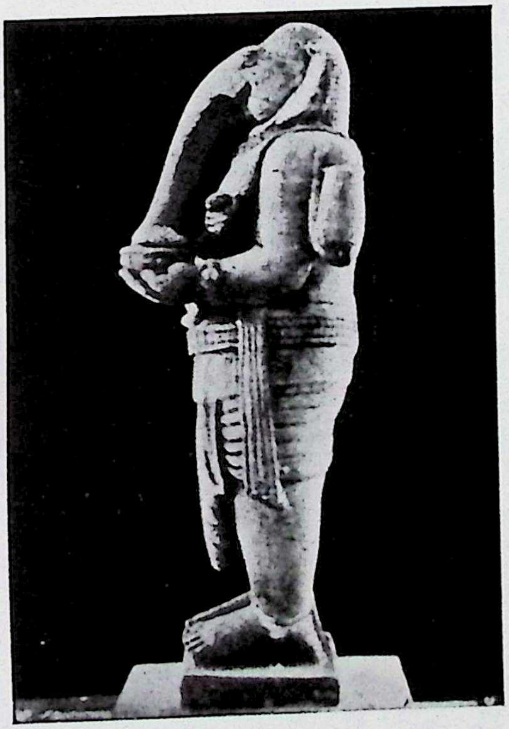
a. Pre-Khmer image



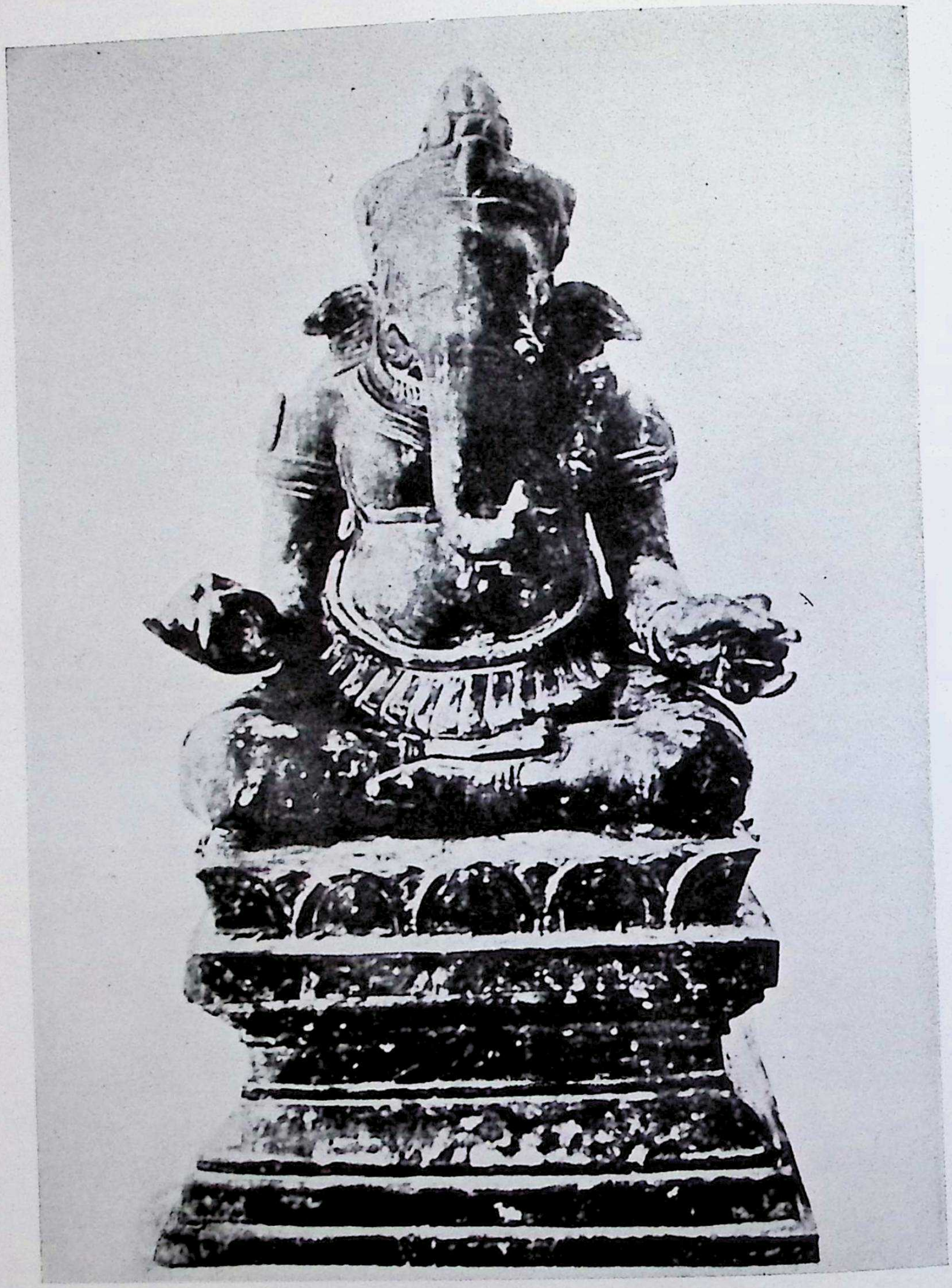
b. Khmer image



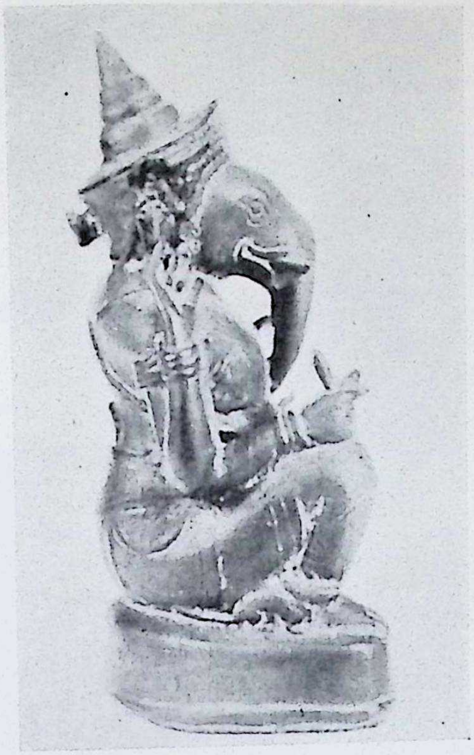
c. Pre-Khmer figure



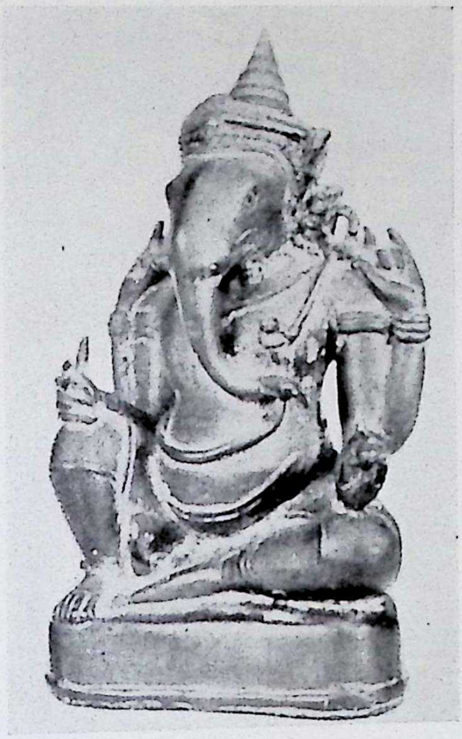
d. Cham figure from Mi-so'n



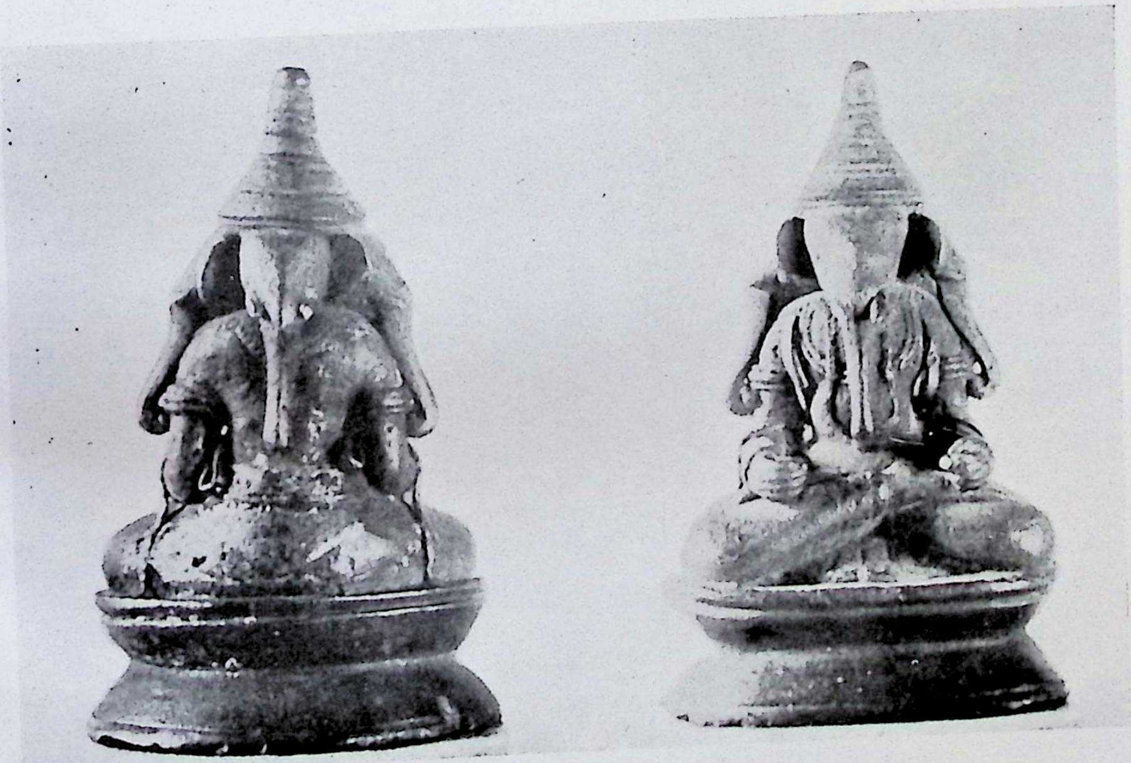
Cambodian bronze statue of Gaṇeśa



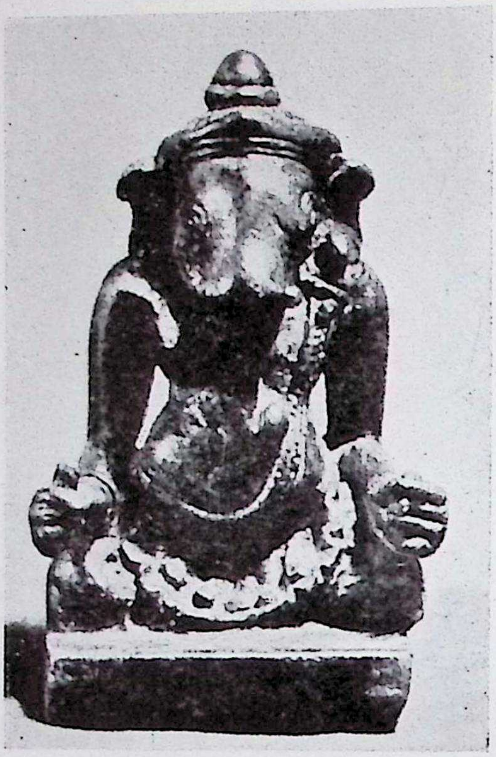
a. Ayuthian bronze, side view



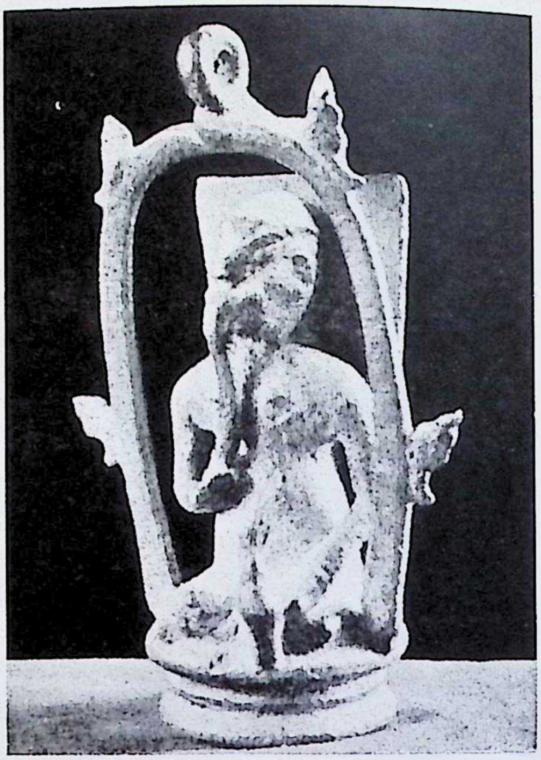
b. Ayuthian bronze, front view



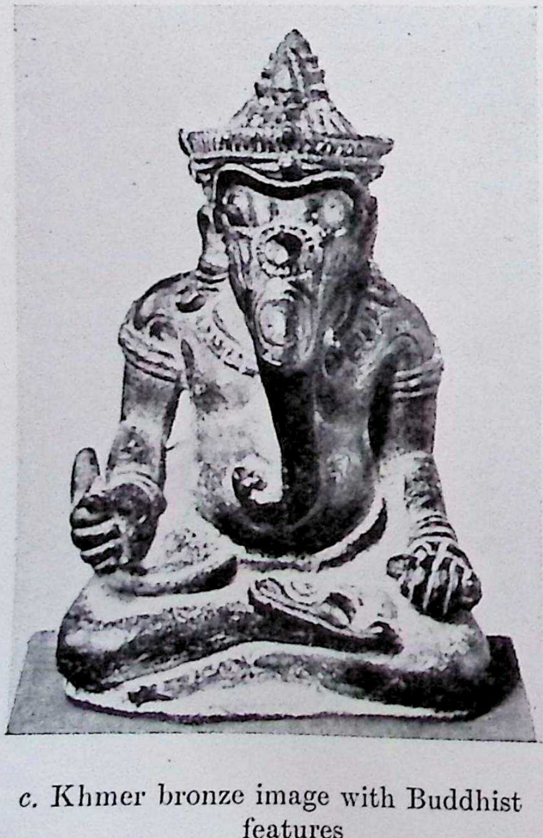
c. Four-headed Gaṇeśa from Indo-China



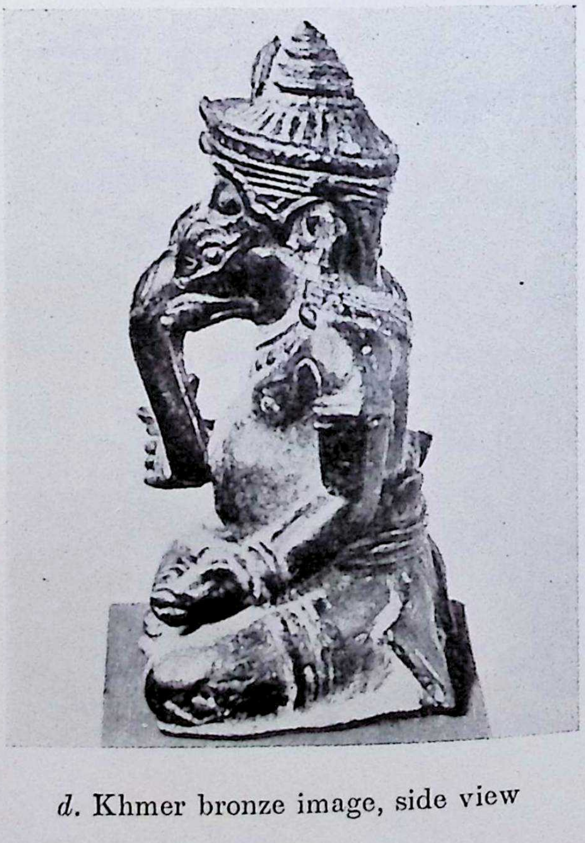
a. Khmer bronze image



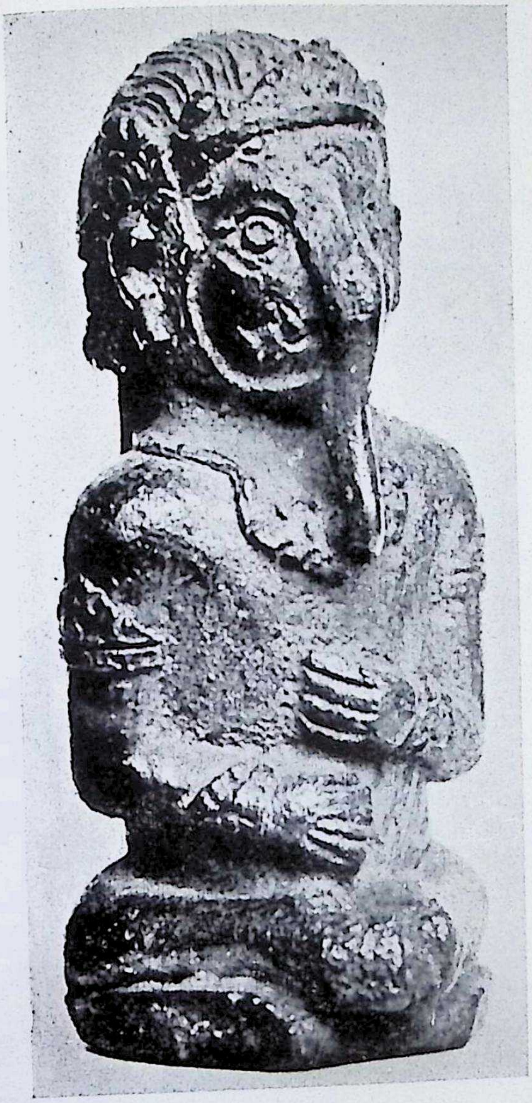
b. Khmer bronze figure



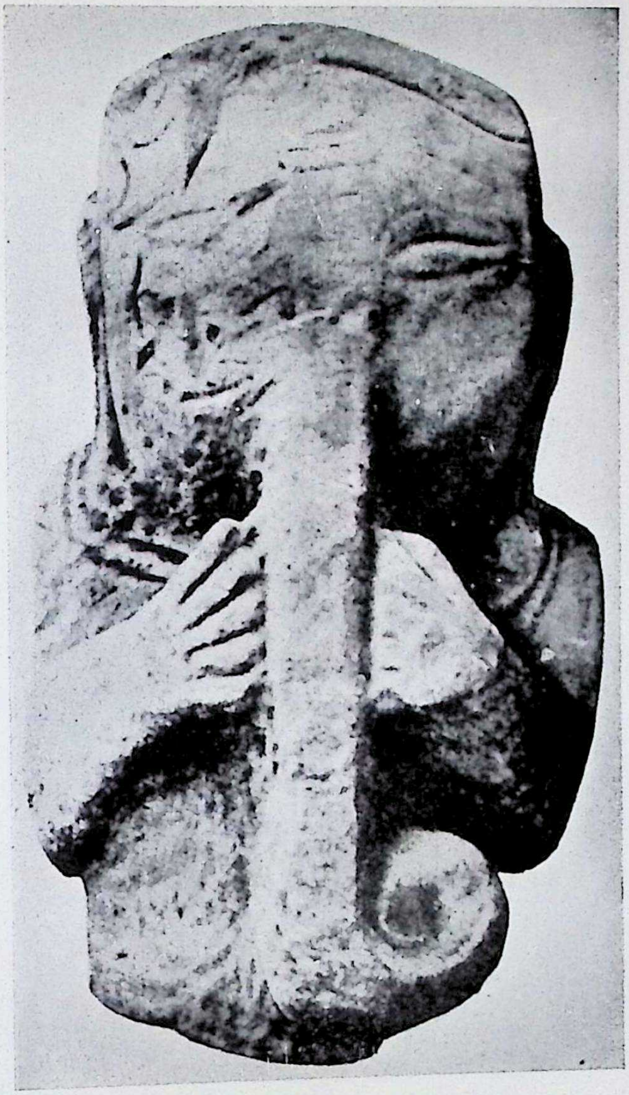
c. Khmer bronze image with Buddhist features



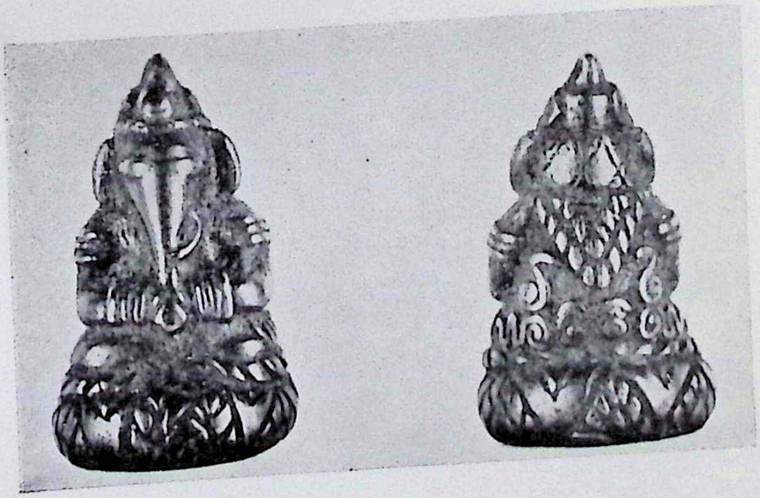
d. Khmer bronze image, side view



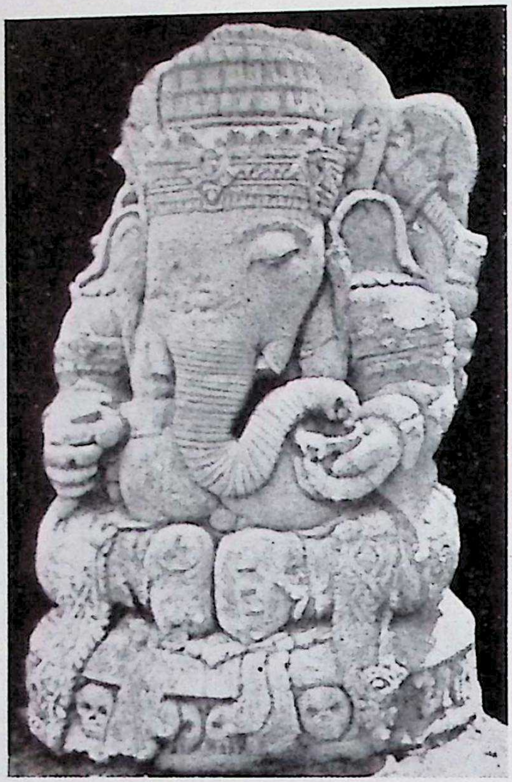
a. Primitive Javanese bronze



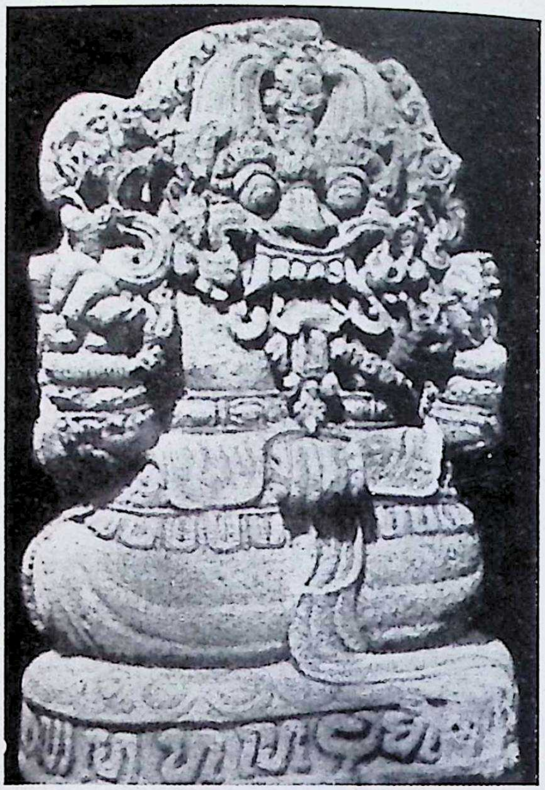
b. Early Javanese stone sculpture



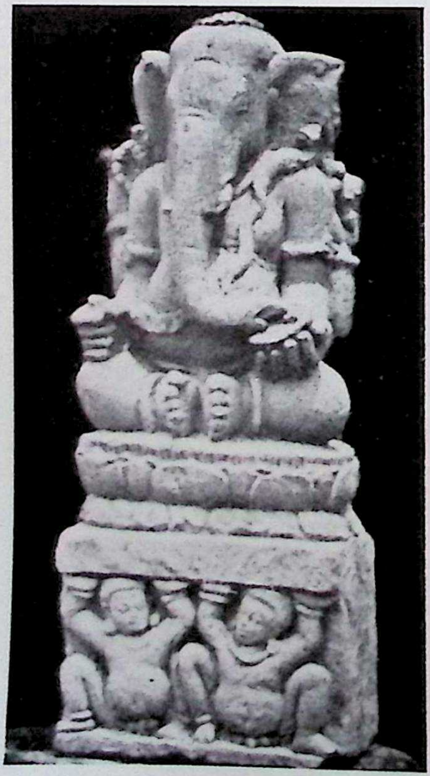
c. Javanese bronze figure



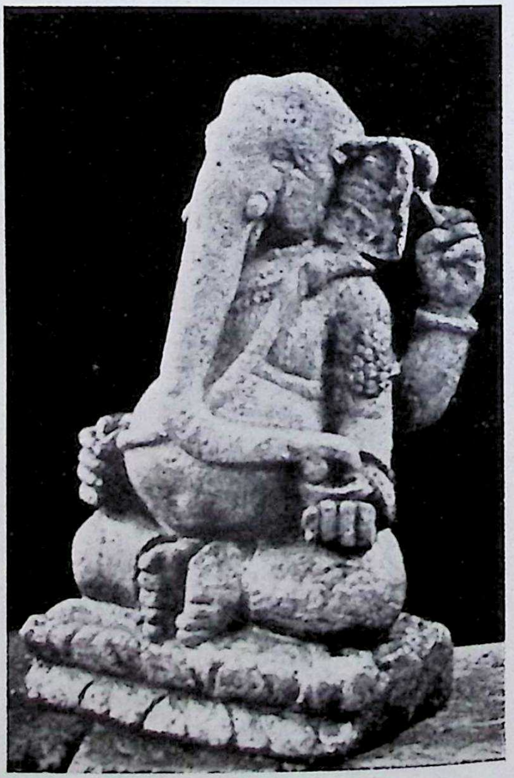
a. Gaṇeśa of Bara, front view



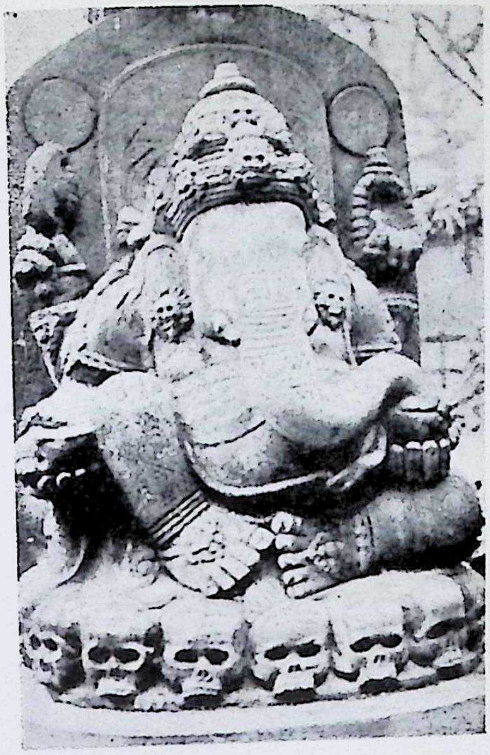
b. Gaṇeśa of Bara, back view



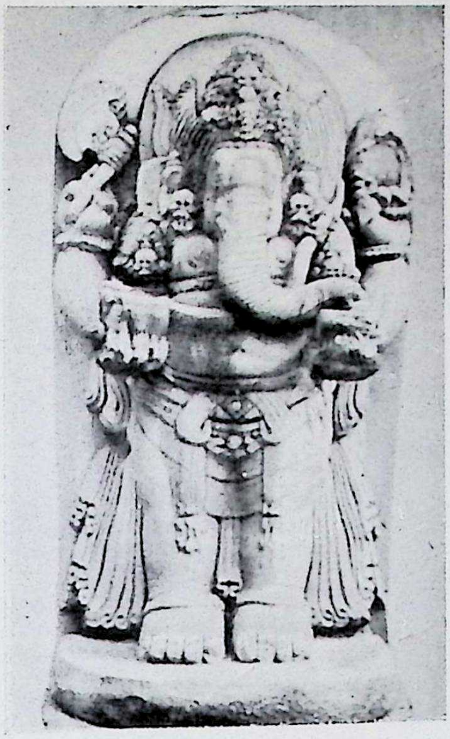
c. Image from Tjaṇḍi Pariksit



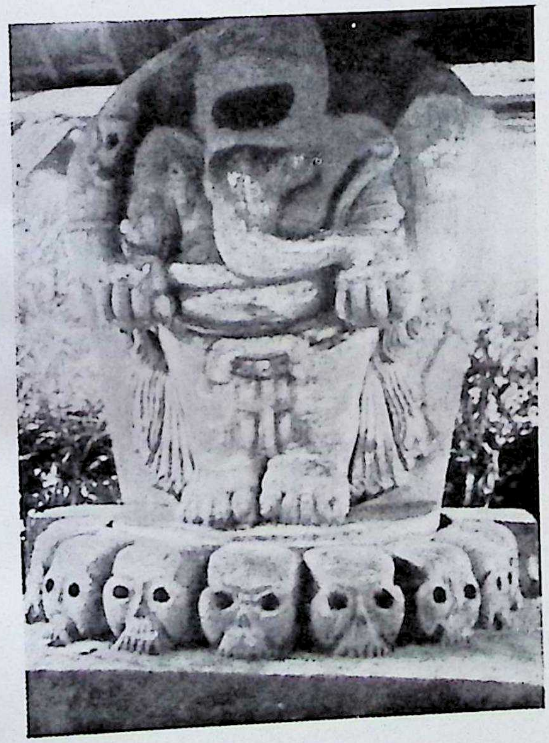
d. Image from the Dieng plateau



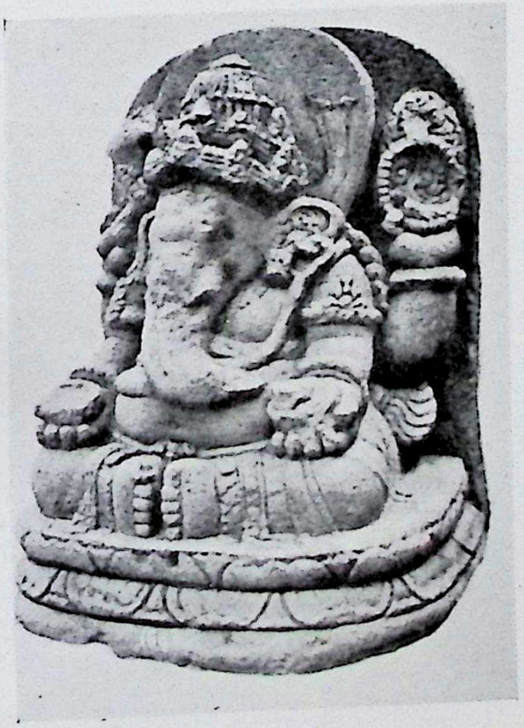
a. Tjaṇḍi Singasari Gaṇeśa



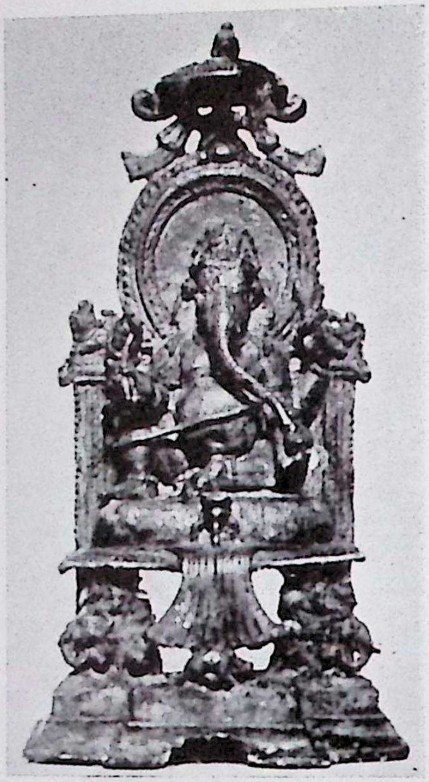
b. Javanese standing figure



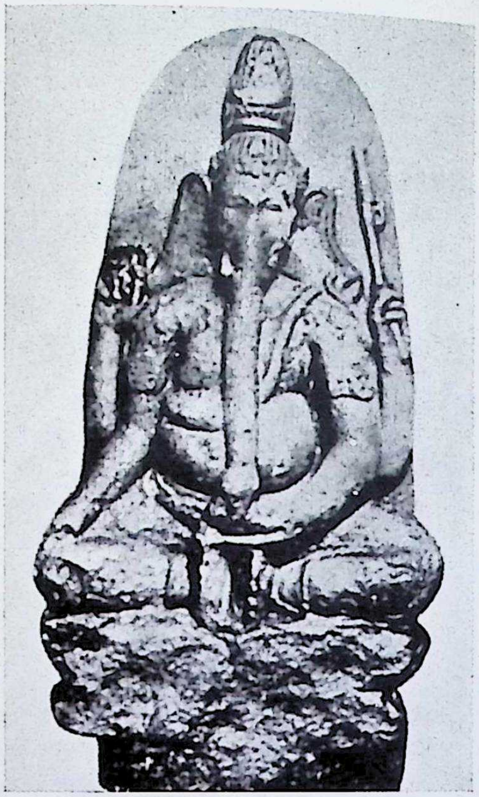
c. Gaṇeśa from Karang Katès



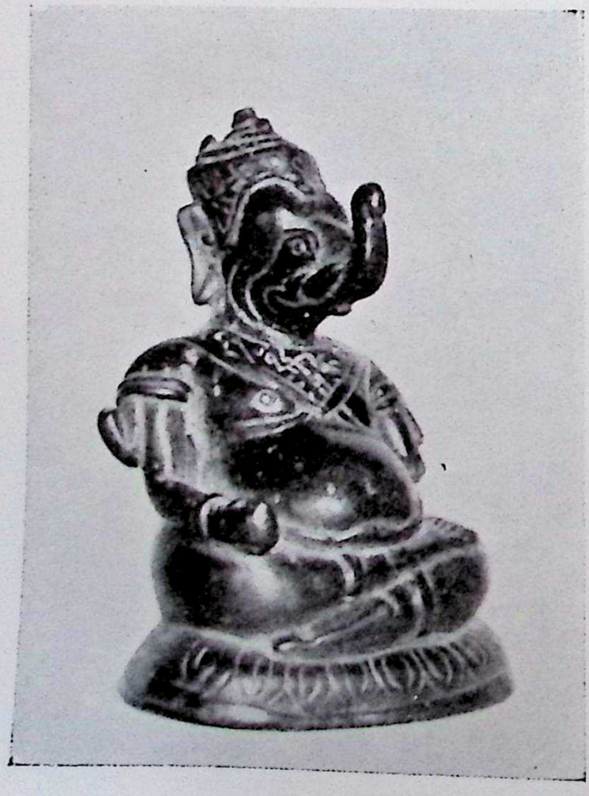
d. *Ramassé* type of Javanese image



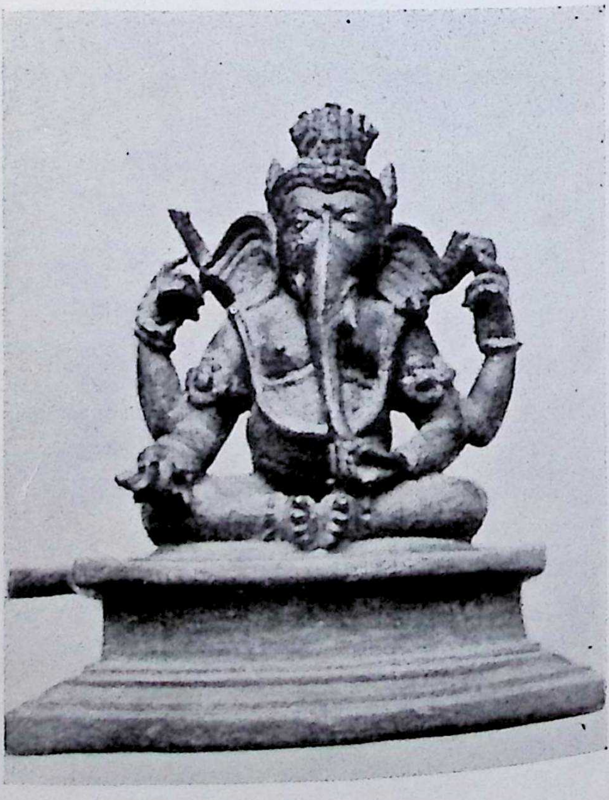
a. Javanese bronze image



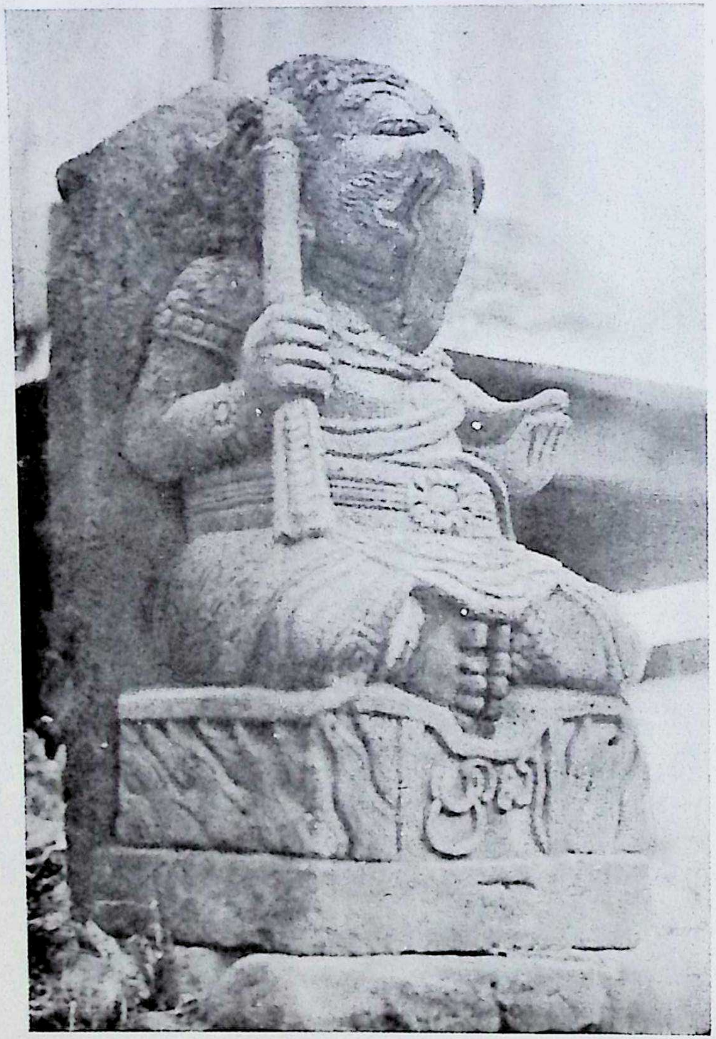
b. Stone figure from Borneo



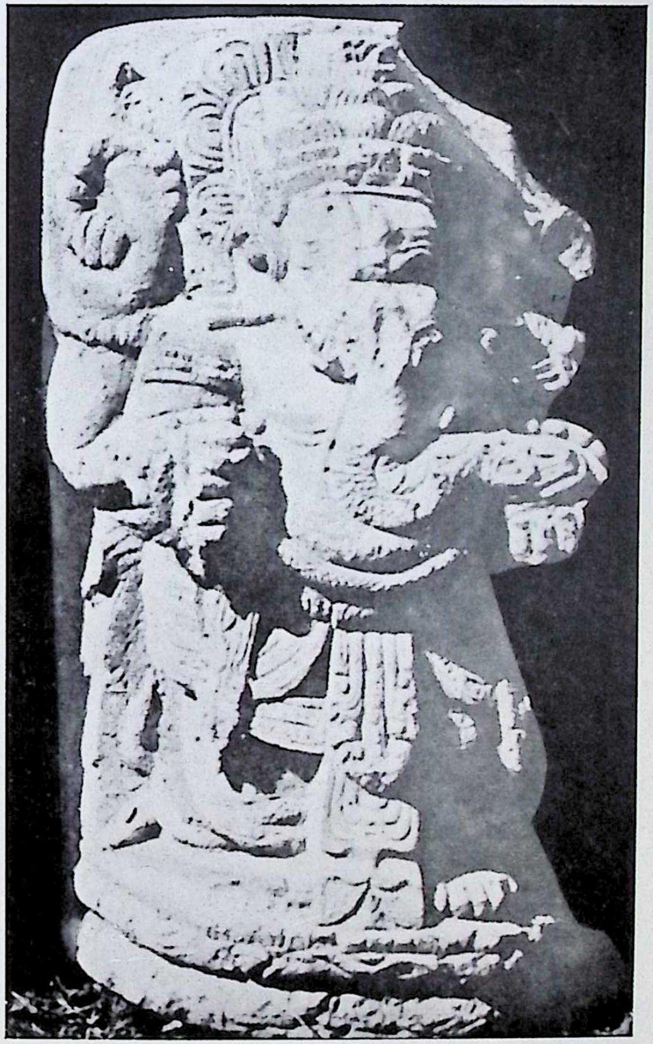
c. Bronze image, Indo-Chinese (?)



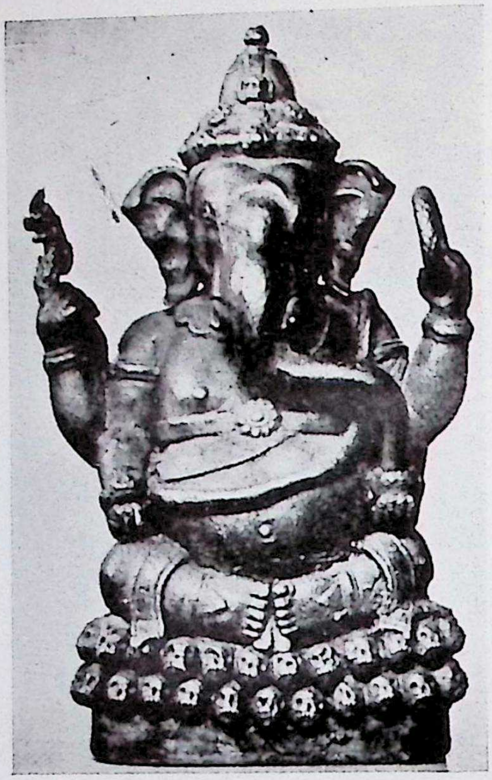
d. Bronze figure from Borneo



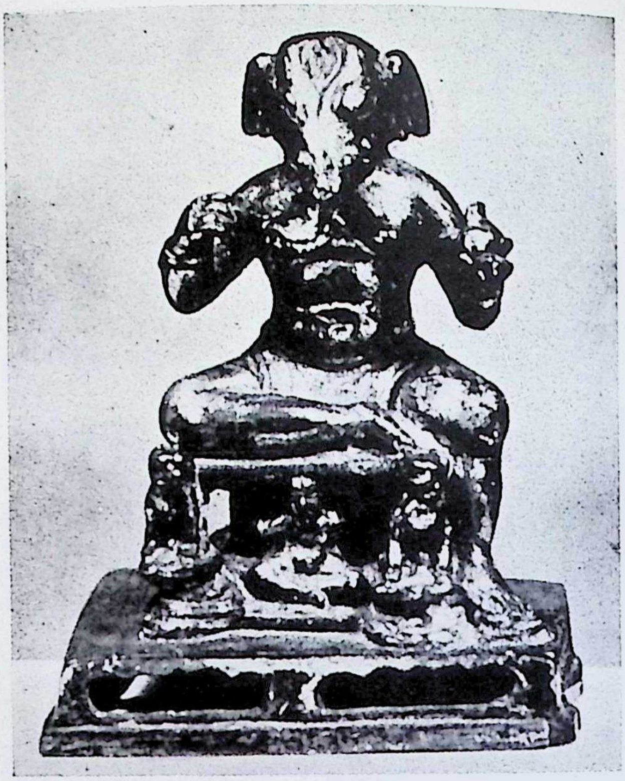
a. Balinese Gaṇeśa in role of Fudō (?)



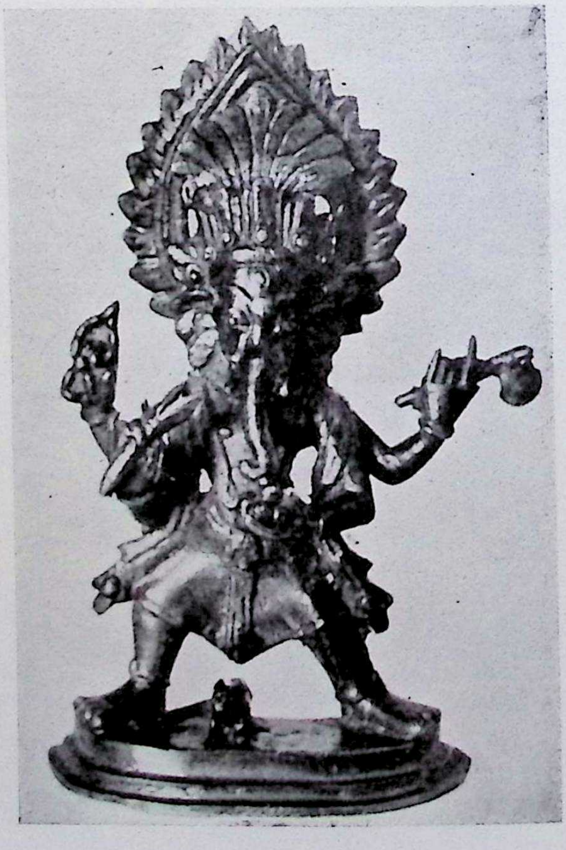
b. Balinese *stela*



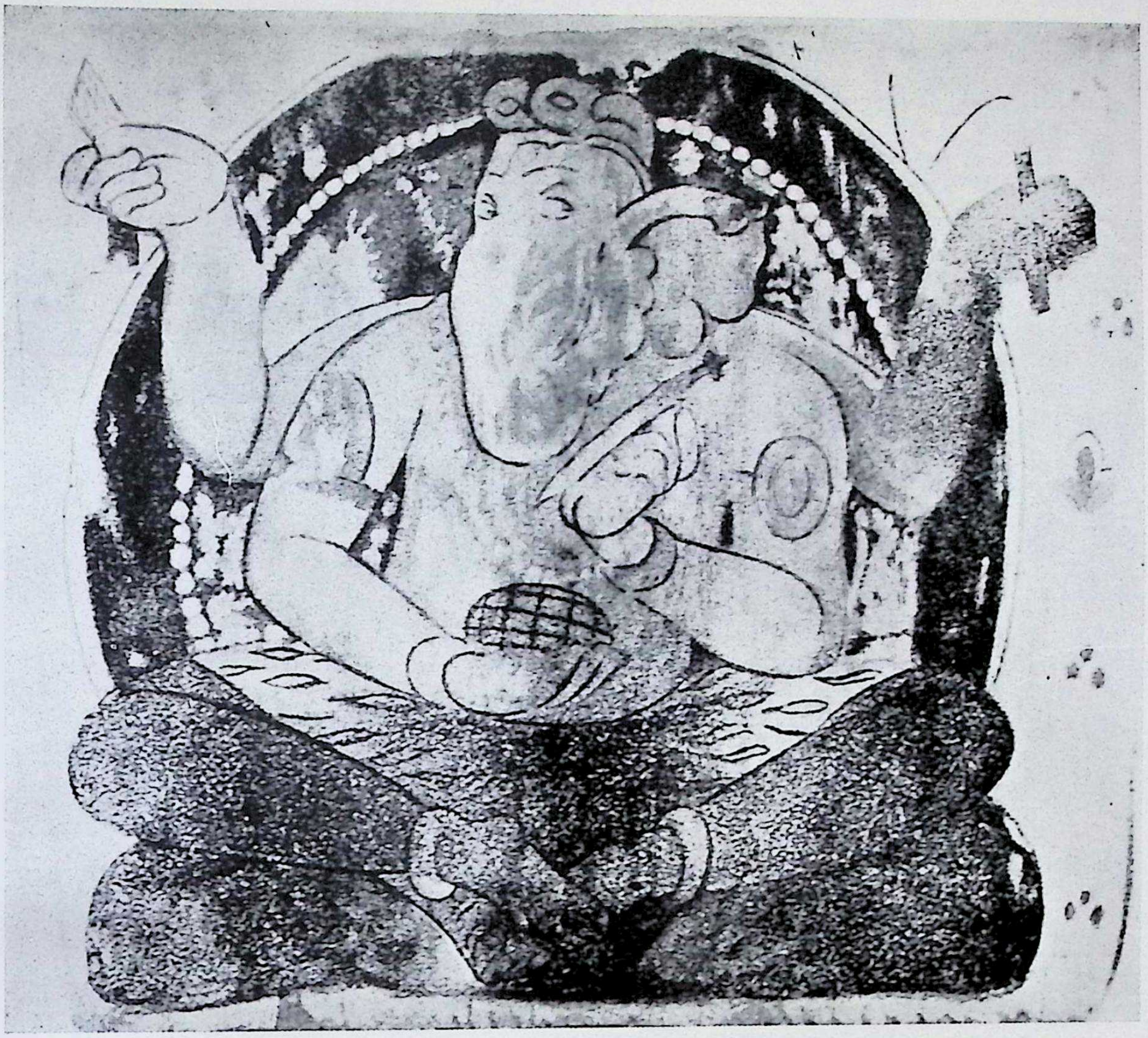
a. Javanese bronze image



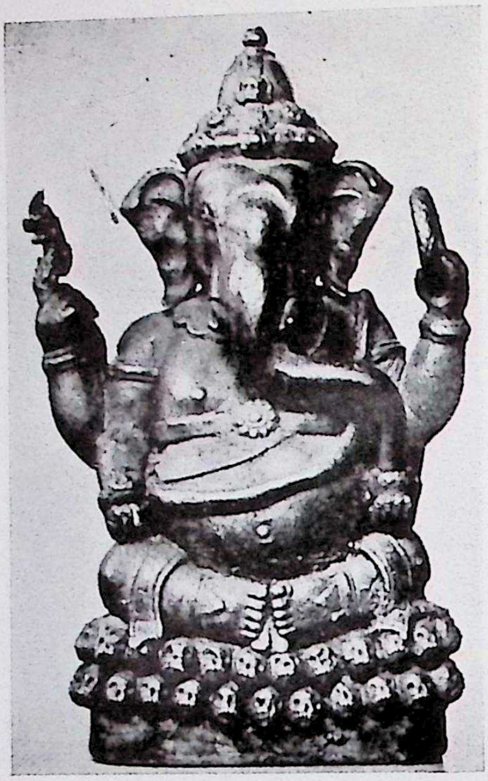
b. Gilt-bronze image, Chinese (?)



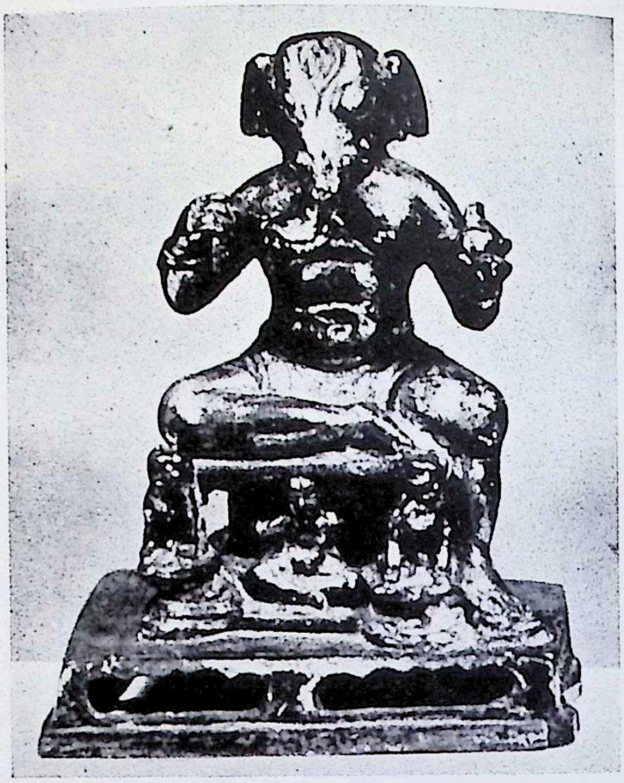
c. Nepalese bronze image



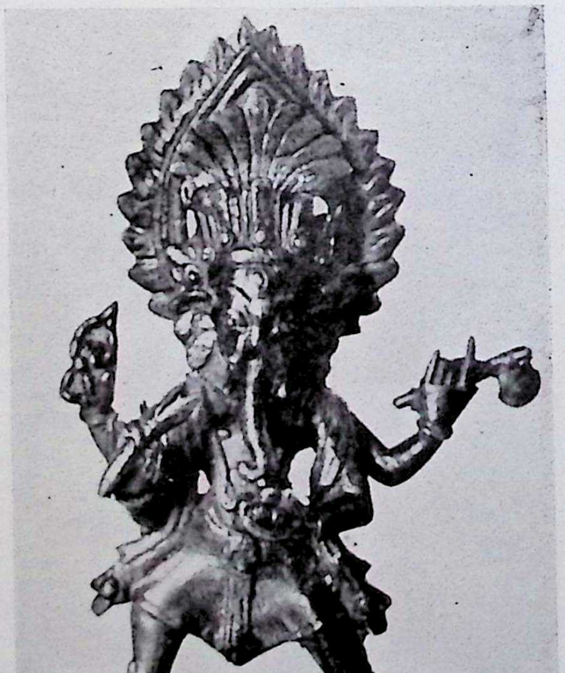
Painted panel from Endere, Chinese Turkestan



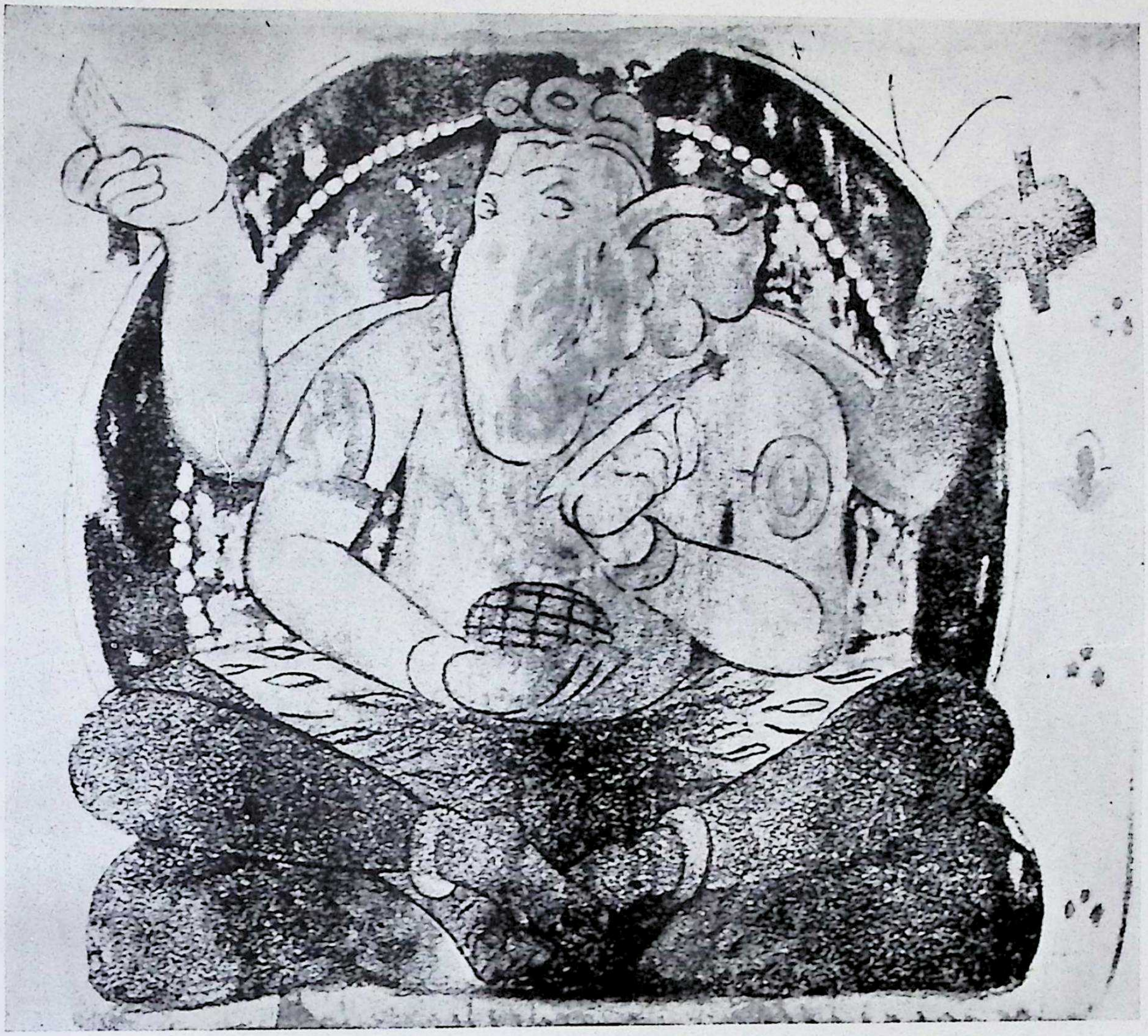
a. Javanese bronze image



b. Gilt-bronze image, Chinese (?)

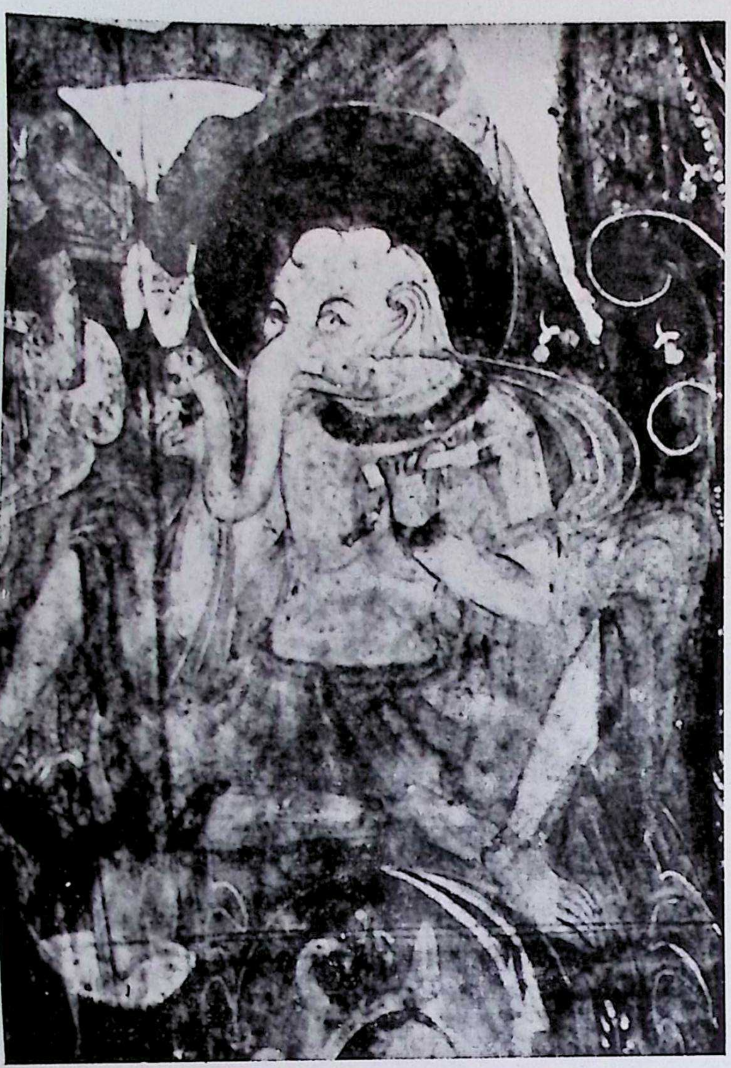


c. Nepalese bronze image

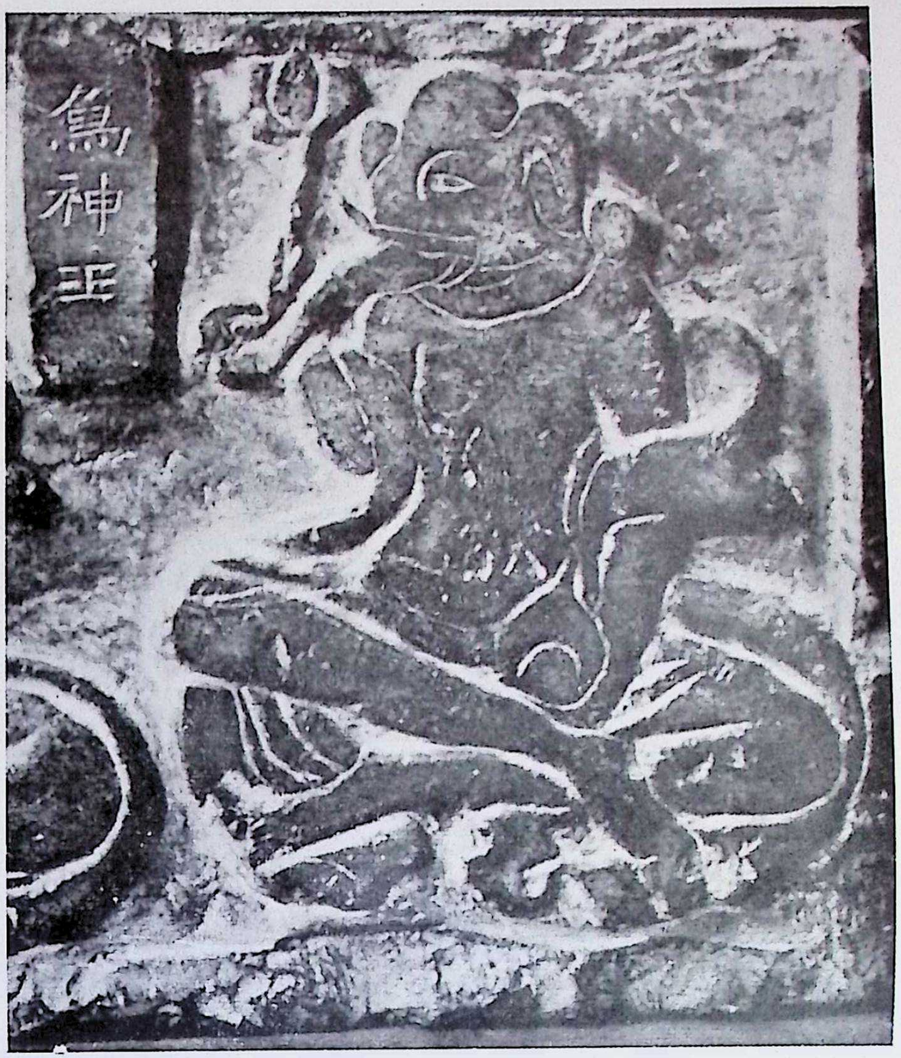


Painted panel from Endere, Chinese Turkestan

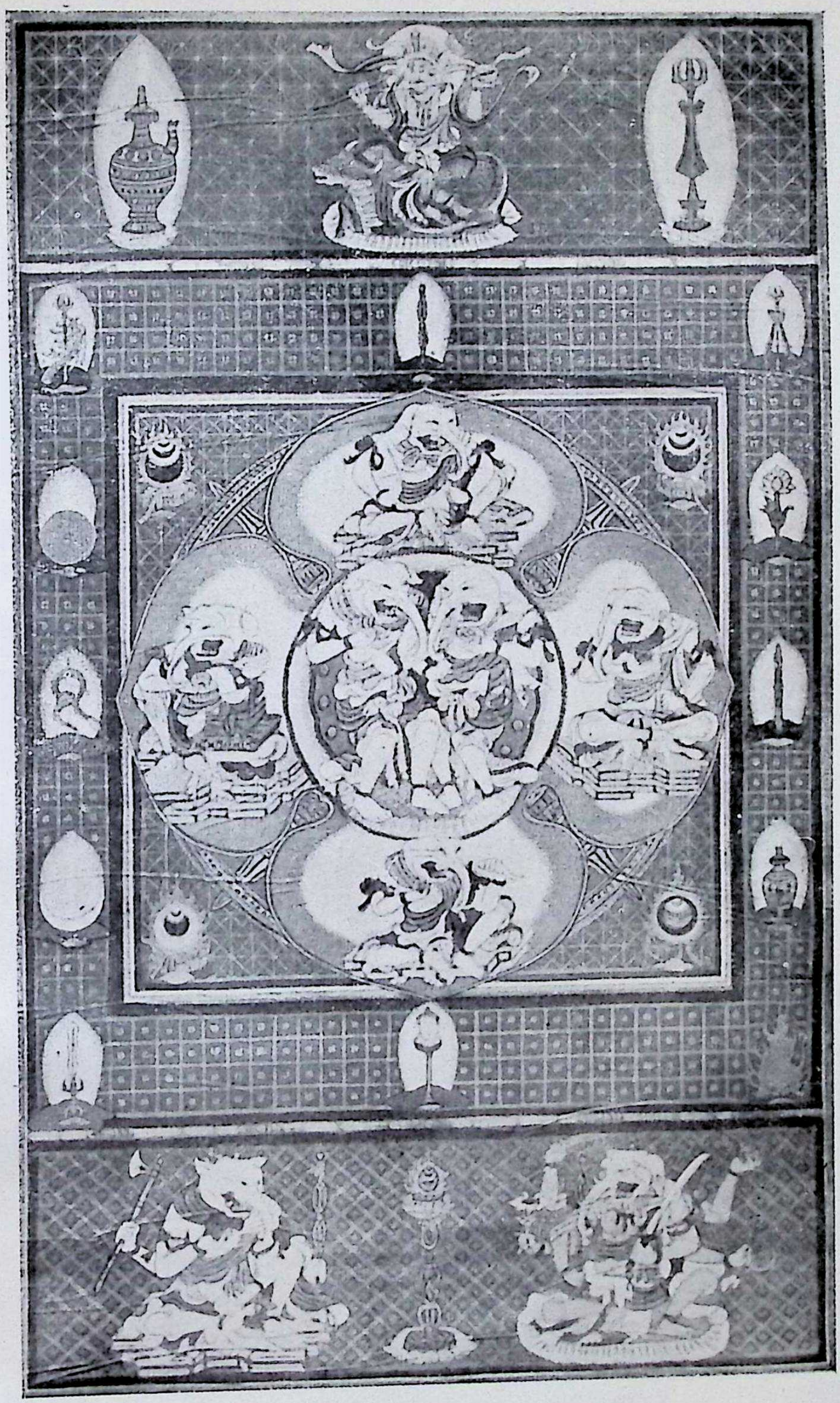
PLATE 36



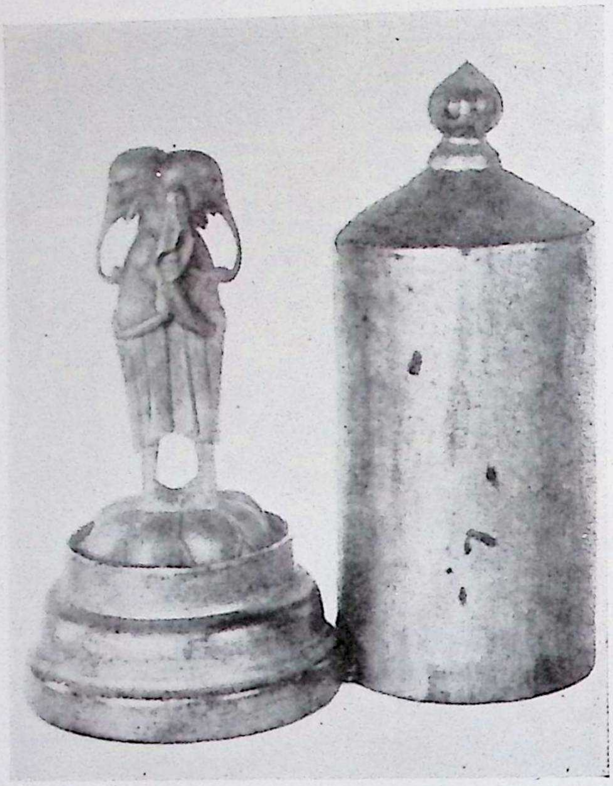
a. Fresco at Tun huang



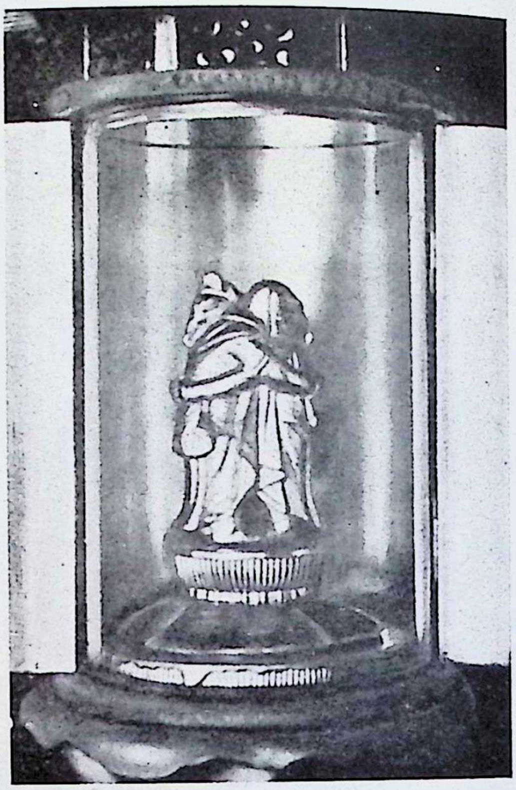
b. Bas-relief on base of Buddhist *stela*



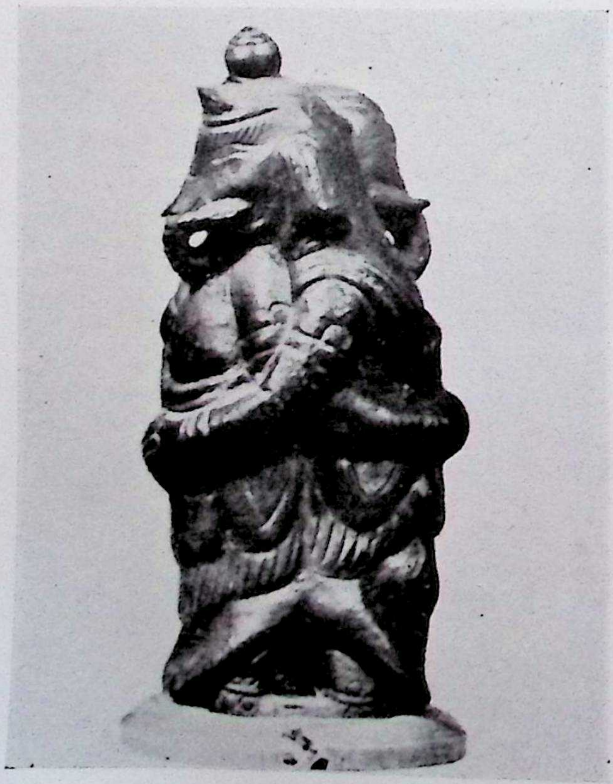
Kakemono in the Monastery of Kōya-san



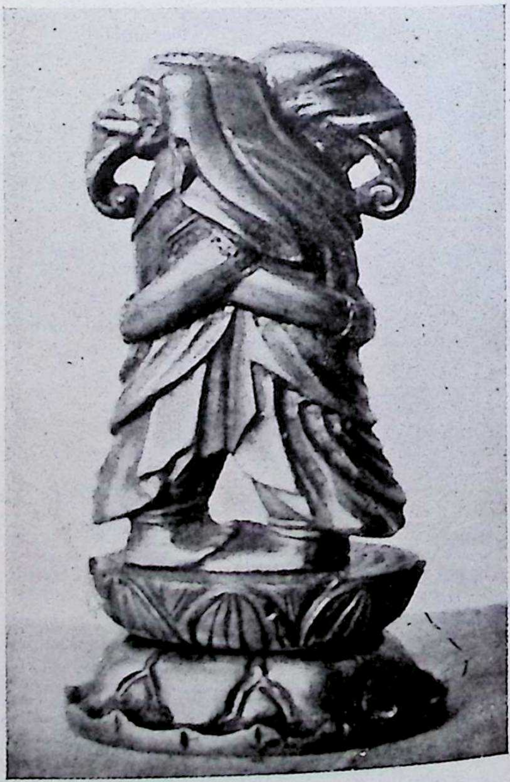
a. Kangi-ten and cover



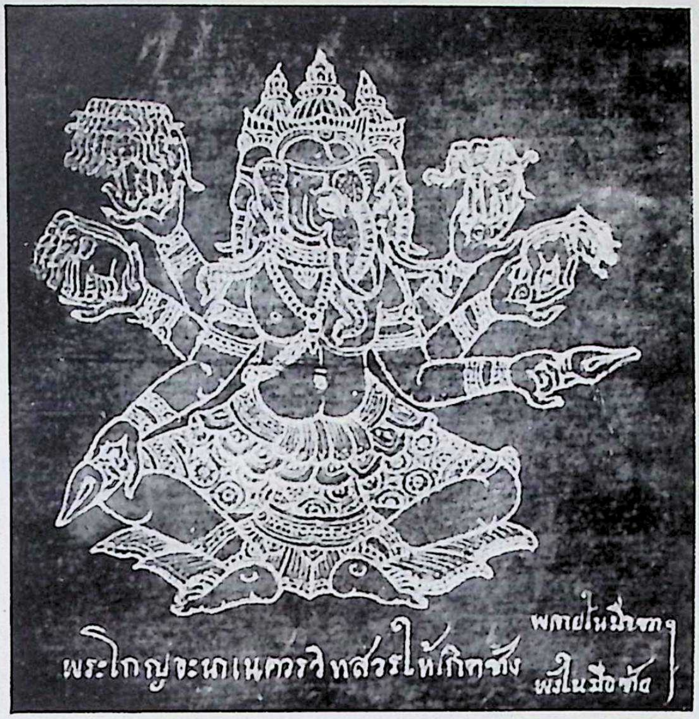
b. Kangi-ten in a *zuchi*



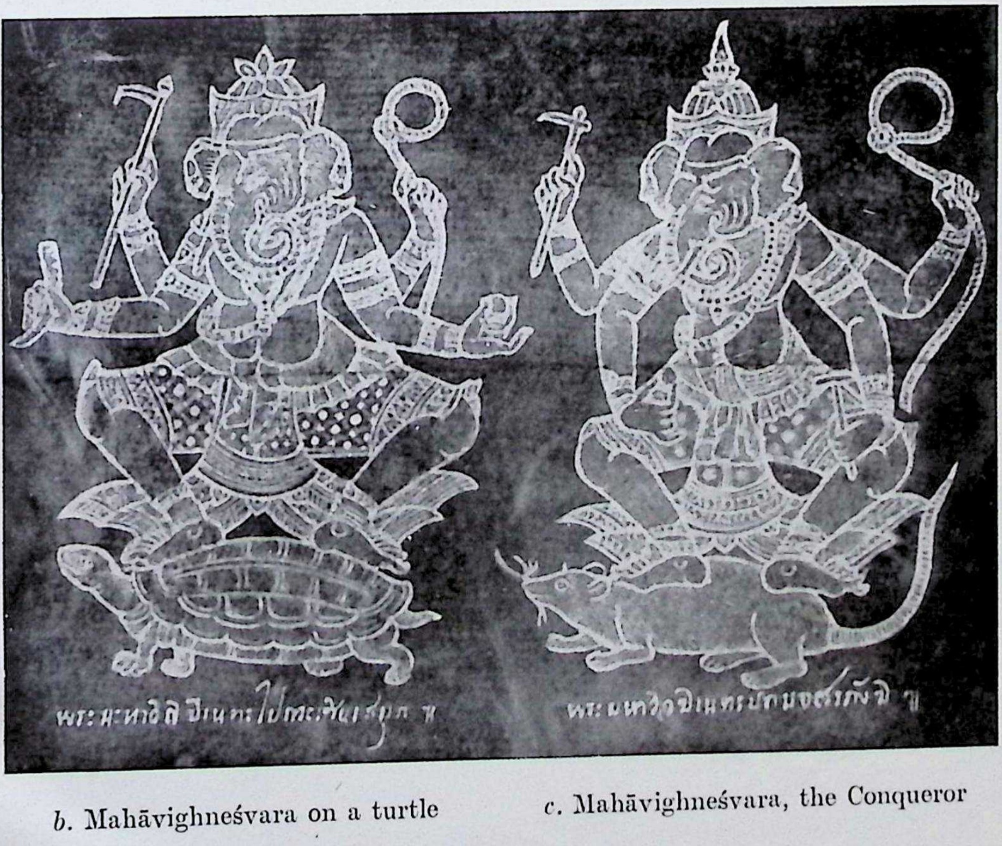
c. Kangi-ten



d. Kangi-ten


พระโกญจะนาเนศวรวิทสวรให้เกิดชัย

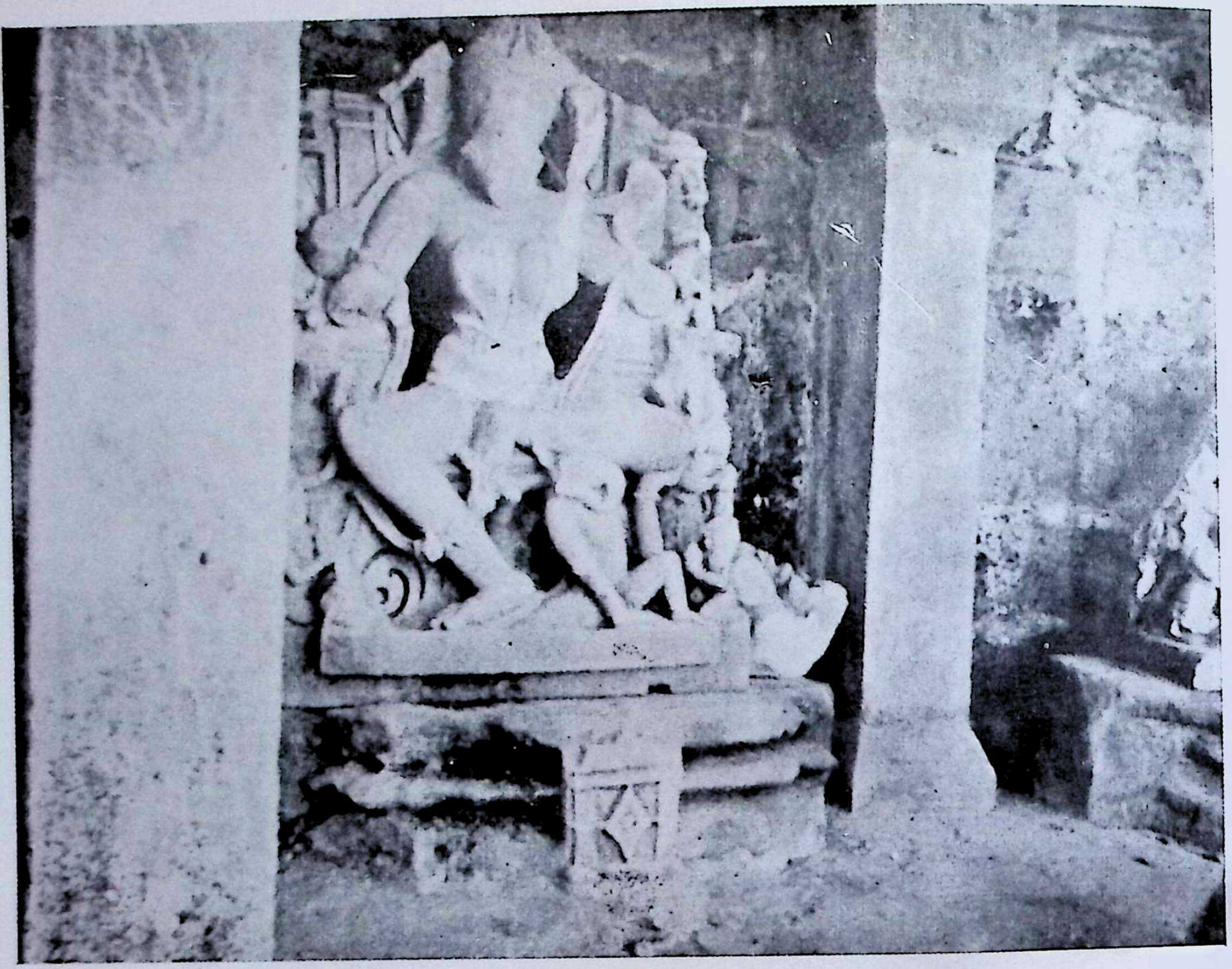
a. Koñcanāneśvara Vidasavara



b. Mahāvighneśvara on a turtle

c. Mahāvighneśvara, the Conqueror

PLATE 40



Gaṇeśānī in the arcade of the temple of the Gaurī-Śaṅkara at Bhera-ghat

294.5515
G332g

YAKṢAS

by

Dr. ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

Particular significance attaches to Yakṣas in Indian mythology, religion and art. Their almost universal presence in the earlier Indian religions, Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina, wherein they are invested with peculiar traits and powers, indicates their importance.

Ananda Coomaraswamy's *Yakṣas* is an attempt at bringing together the mass of information from literary and monumental sources about Yakṣas and Yakṣis, their origin, and development from the conceptual, mythological and iconographical points of view. Coomaraswamy has shown how this non-and pre-Aryan "animistic" concept originated and, in the historical times, dovetailed with the Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina religious systems to the extent that the concept of Yakṣattva got closely bound up with the idea of reincarnation.

In the preparation of this monograph, Coomaraswamy has extensively drawn upon the sectarian and semi-secular literature and has shown unmistakable evidence of the Yakaṣas' once honourable status, their benevolence toward men and the affection felt by men toward them. Coomaraswamy begins by tracing the origin of the word Yakṣa which is first found in *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa*, where it means nothing more than 'a wondrous thing'. In course of time Yakṣas and Yakṣis are often mentioned and their names are found in the Epics, Buddhist and Jaina works and even in sculpture. In Jaina books, Yakkhas are often called Devas, where, as Śāsana Devatās, they are usually guardian angels. In Buddhist works they are sometimes represented as teachers of good morals and as guardian spirits.

Of equal importance are the Yakṣas and Yakṣis in early Indian art and in the early examples (Bharhut, Sāñci, Gandhāra, etc.) they are frequently represented as Atlantes, supporters of buildings and superstructures. The early iconography of Yakṣas, again seems to have formed the foundation of later Hindu and Buddhist iconography. Coomaraswamy has traced a kind of Bhakti cult centring round the worship of Yakṣas on the basis of the Yakṣa caityas, the offerings to the Yakṣas and has tried to show that the facts of Yakṣa worship correspond almost exactly with those of other Bhakti religions.

Coming as it does from the pen of Ananda Coomaraswamy, this brilliant monograph is the acme of scholarship and brilliance and provides a mass of well-documented information. The work is divided into two parts, an appendix giving Tale of a Yakṣa found in the *Divyāvadāna*, alongwith 73 plates.

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by

NIK DOUGLAS

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